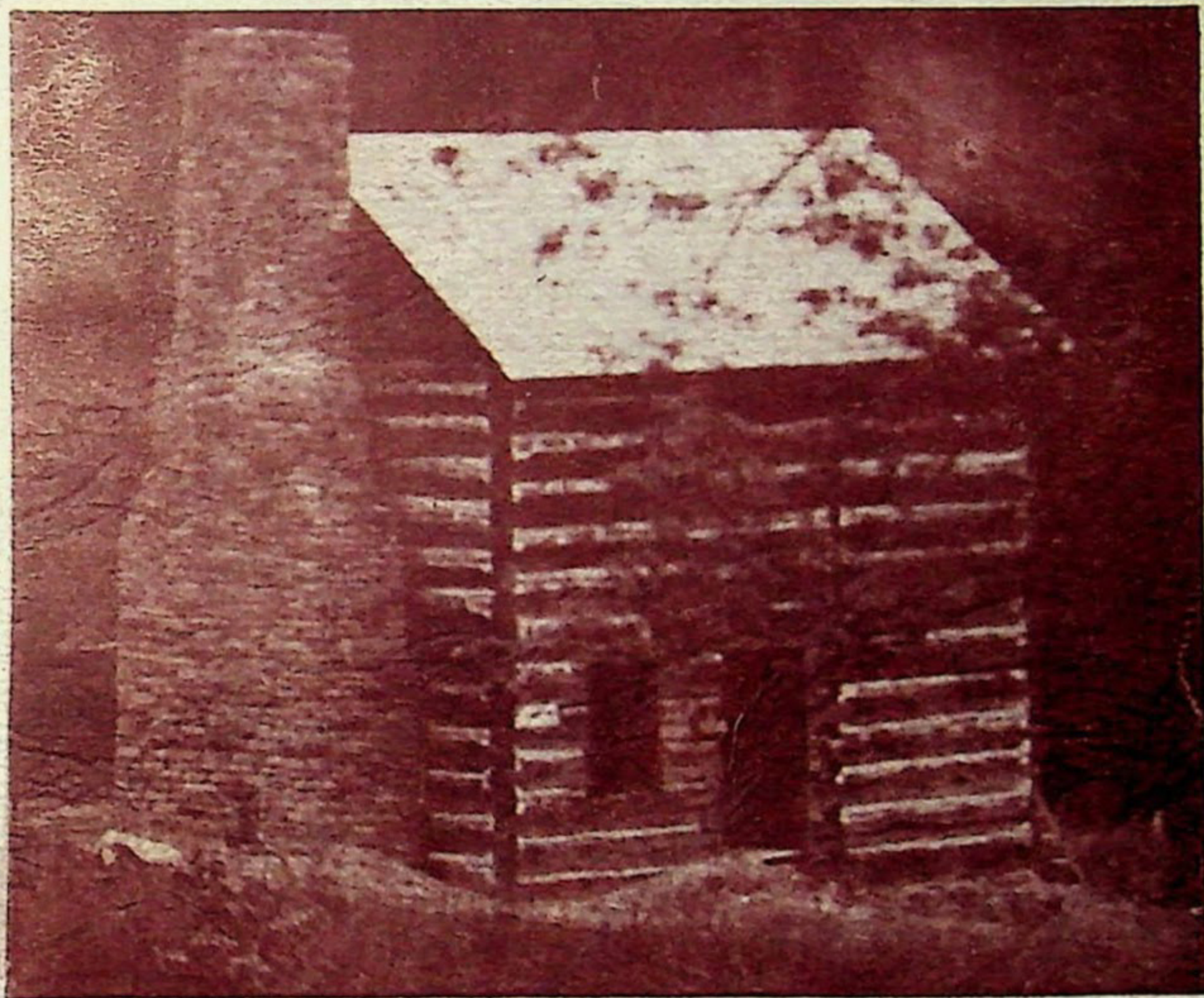


# Historical Sketches of Southwest Virginia



## ***Kilgore Fort house ~ 1786***

*Photo by L. F. Addington*

**Southwest Virginia Historical Society**

**Publication No. 9**

**1975**

**Price: \$3.00 plus 12c tax**



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REF 331-216







## THE KILGORE FORTHOUSE

*By L. F. Addington*

Rev. Robert Kilgore, affectionately known as Robin, married Mrs. Jane Porter Green in 1785. She was the daughter of Patrick Porter who lived on Fall Creek (near present Dungannon) and built a fort and a grist mill there. She was the widow of James Green who was killed by Indians December 31, 1782. (1)

A traditional story has come down to us concerning this Indian killing, but now we know it is partially untrue. Here is the story as related in the History of Scott County: "In March 1783 Charles Kilgore, James Green, and a man by the name of McKinney left Fort Blackmore and went to the Pound River (in present Wise County) to hunt, and while there they were surprised by Indians, and Charles Kilgore, and James Green were killed. McKinney made his escape and returned to the fort. A search party led by McKinney found the bodies of Kilgore and Green, and buried them in the hollow of a large chestnut tree on the north bank of the Pound River, a short distance above the mouth of Indian Creek." (2)

Further proof of James Green's death at the time cited above is an entry in the court records of Washington County, Virginia, July 15, 1783: "On motion of Patrick Porter (James' father-in-law) administration is granted him on the estate of James Green deceased who made oath thereto and entered into and acknowledged his bond with Samuel Ritchie and John Martin his securities in the sum of one hundred pounds for the faithful administration of the said decedent's estate." (3)

But nowhere in these records do we have notice of Charles Kilgore's having been killed by Indians. To the contrary we have explicit proof that he lived long after James Green's massacre by the Indians. His Revolutionary War pension statement is proof of this.

"January 30, 1929

Mr. Hugh M. Addington  
Nickelsville, Virginia

Sir

I advise you the Revolutionary War record of this bureau shows that Charles Kilgore served in Captain James Dysart's Company in Colonel William Campbell's Virginia Regiment during the Revolution.

He was pensioned from April 28, 1809 on account of disability incurred in service.

In May 1820 he was living in Green County, Tennessee.

Respectfully,  
Winfield Scott, Commissioner" (4)



The fact that Charles Kilgore's name was not on the 1783 Washington County taxable list but his wife's name Winnie was, can easily lead one to believe that Charles was actually killed by Indians immediately prior to this date; however, one must take into consideration that Charles could have been away from home and the matter of making a tax report fell to his wife. Jane Porter Green's name also appears on this list but this is understandable since we know her husband James had been killed by Indians.

But why was not Charles at his home on Fall Creek (near present Dunganon) to take care of the tax report of that year?

A good guess is that he was in Green County, North Carolina (now Tennessee) for his pension statement in the archives at Washington, D. C. shows, according to a copy in the hands of this writer, that it was written near Greenville, Tennessee to suffice for a previous statement which had been destroyed by a War Department fire in 1814. According to the records he was still receiving a pension in 1820. The book "King's Mountain Men" by White, page 197 states: "Charles Kilgore was a private under Campbell, and was wounded. In the pension list of Green County, Tennessee, in 1820, he is named as an invalid with an allowance of \$48 per year."

Since the 1820 pension payment was the last one made it seems safe to assume that Charles died about that time. Some genealogists place his death in the year 1823 because in the archives of the Green County Court is a will made in the year 1822 by one Charles Kilgore. This will (examined by this writer) leaves legacies to sons John M. and James M. which led Hugh M. Addington, author of "Charles Kilgore of King's Mountain" to conclude that Charles had married in Tennessee after his first wife's death (Winnie Clayton).

But an examination of the book "Virginia Soldiers of the Revolution", by Burgess shows clearly that the will was made by a different Charles Kilgore. Even his name had a middle initial J. Therefore, this eliminates Washington County Charles' second family.

But what happened to his real family? We know that Charles, Jr. the eldest son, moved from the Fall Creek area of Russell County, (formerly Washington County, later Scott County), to Green County, Tennessee in 1787. It is logical to conclude that the father Charles, Sr., went with him or even preceded him since he didn't make a tax report in 1783, but left it to Winnie, his wife. Neither he nor Winnie is on the Virginia 1784 tax report.

So, what happened to Winnie and the 400 acre farm Charles owned on Fall Creek? Hugh M. Addington in his book "Charles Kilgore of King's Mountain" says Winnie died in 1784. He does not document the statement. Where did she die? In the bounds of present Scott County or Green County, Tennessee? From Charles, Jr.'s pension statement we learn that Charles, Jr. moved from Green County into South Carolina, thence back to Virginia. According to his pension statement he was born in Orange County, North Carolina, which means, of course, that most of Charles, Sr.'s children were born in Orange County, North Carolina. Charles, Sr. took up 400 acres of land on Fall Creek in 1773.



It seems that all of Charles, Sr.'s children, except Charles, Jr., remained in the bounds of present Scott County, since they are known to have married and reared families here.

Robert Kilgore married Jane Porter Green in 1785 (5) and began to look for a place to call home for her and her son James Green, Jr., born Feb. 12, 1783. (6)

As a girl Jane had lived in her father's forthouse called Porter's Fort, situated about a mile up from the mouth of Fall Creek, on the western side.

Therefore it is likely that Jane, having lived during her girlhood in the Porter forthouse and since her husband James Green had been killed by Indians, insisted that her new home be a forthouse.

And that is what Robert Kilgore did, build a forthouse. He built it near Copper Creek one and a half miles southwest of a cluster of houses which later, with coming of James Nickels from Tazewell County, became known as Nickelsville. (7)

This house was built in the year 1786 (8) of hewn logs and the cracks between them chinked with limestone. In case of Indian attack the inmates could go upstairs, and let down a trap door over the stairway. Three port holes, one in the west end and one in each side, made it possible to shoot out at Indians should any ever appear.

It is said that the house was never attacked, however a band of Shawnees camped for a short while on the cliff tops to the south.

Over the years the house deteriorated. So long as a roof was kept on it the interior remained in fairly good condition, but of recent years the roof was neglected and the whole structure rapidly went to ruin. The big chimney began to slump and shatter.

Then fortunately the Scott County government secured funds to restore it to its original condition.

Now we come to Rev. Robert Kilgore, the builder of the forthouse. There is a mystery about his ancestry, which came to light only recently.

In his book, "Charles Kilgore of King's Mountain", Hugh M. Addington placed Robert in Charles, Sr.'s list of children as number two. But Robert, Jr., who lived in the forthouse with his father, went to Gate City upon his father's death and in the courthouse entered in the death register the following:

"Rev. Robert Kilgore, age 88, Died May 29, 1854. Residence Copper Creek. Place of Birth — unknown.  
Parents — Robert and Milly Kilgore.  
Reported by his son Robert Kilgore, Jr."



This leads us to believe that Rev. Robert was not the son of Charles, Sr., as has been assumed, but instead the son of Robert, who was a brother of Charles.

This we know about the elder Robert: he acquired 41 acres of land near Clinch River in 1772 and settled on it. (9) It was probably in the Fall Creek area where a year later his brother Charles settled.

It seems quite logical for us to believe that Robert, Jr. or may we say Robert III who made the death entry would surely have known his grandfather's and grandmother's names. Had they been Charles and Winnie he would have said so.

The last time we find Robert the settler's name in print is on the Virginia tax report 1782. But after that he vanishes.

Could it be possible that he went with his brother Charles into North Carolina (now Tennessee)?

Rev. Robert Kilgore of the forthouse was known far beyond his residence as a minister in the Regular Baptist Church. He began his ministry at the Regular Primitive Baptist Church on Copper Creek two miles east of Nickelsville where he was one of the original members. (10) At that time the meetings were held in dwelling houses and sometimes in the Good Intent schoolhouse.

It was here that Rev. Robin was ordained to preach April 16, 1808.(11)

Later he often held services at the forthouse. It was here between the dates of 1815 and 1853 that he performed wedding ceremonies for 285 couples. (12)

And here at his beloved forthouse he died May 29, 1854. His wife Jane Porter Green had preceeded him in death by 12 years. (14) They were buried in the Nickelsville Cemetery. An emblem on Rev. Robin's stone shows he was a mason. In all probability he first joined the masons at a lodge held in the loft of the old grist mill on Fall Creek, for as a young man he lived in that vicinity.

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# DICKENSONS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

## Antecedents Prior to 1800

*By Mary Jane Knisely*

There have been various errors in the "Dickenson Story" as it has come down to us. Two of the more glaring errors are (1) that Mary Powell, wife of Henry Dickenson, the Clerk, was the daughter of Ambrose Powell, and (2) that the Virginia Dickensons were descended from Henry, who came to Virginia with brothers Walter and John in 1654. The search for Mary Powell constitutes a study in itself, which is not presented in this treatise. The denouement of Wharton Dickenson's story of the three brothers was published in the Virginia Genealogist, Volume 18, p. 243, October-December 1974.

Here the subject is not so much negation of stories as developing a positive framework of the family history. We therefore begin circa 1800 with related family members in the Southwest Virginia area.

These members are Archelaus, Humphrey, Henry, James, Mary, Elizabeth and Fanny.

It has often been stated that Archelaus and Humphrey were the first to migrate to Southwest Virginia, circa 1769 (1). There seems little reason to doubt this, and it suggests they were "older brothers."\*

We know of no extant birth date for Archelaus. He married Prudence Rowlett of Prince Edward County, Virginia. (2) He died in 1806. (3)

Humphrey's birth date is said to be 8 October, 1747. (4) The date of his death seems to present a problem. There is little doubt that he was killed by the Indians on an island in the Clinch River. The Inventory of the estate of Humphrey Dickenson is found in Washington County records filed 17 August, 1779. (5)

The confusion results from other records of a "Humphrey Dickenson." In the Davis Cemetery in Washington County is a tombstone stating Humphrey Dickenson died 19 June, 1812, age 65 (born 1747). The Mongle-Gobble genealogy lists Elizabeth Mongle as marrying "Murphy Dickenson." (6) This Elizabeth Mongle is said to have been born 23 August, 1783. It is true that in the Inventory of Humphrey Dickenson of 1779 his wife is named Elizabeth. However, Elizabeth Mongle born in 1783 was not born at the time the inventory record above is dated.

There is the will of a Humphrey Dickenson recorded in Washington County records under date of 1822 (7) He names his wife Elizabeth, son Abram, daughters Sally and Maria and states there are 4 other children who are married.

This puzzle is unsolved, insofar as the author knows at this time. For my part, the logical conclusion would be that Humphrey, brother of Arche-

For the sake of brevity we will present only a few vital statistics on these siblings.



laus, is the one who was killed circa 1779. In an entry in the Washington County records under date of 21 August, 1792 conveys to John Dickenson, grandson of Henry Dickenson, late of Prince Edward County, child of Humphrey, one negro man slave named Dick. This is witnessed by Humphrey Dickenson. Here then, it seems clear, that Humphrey killed by the Indians had sons named Humphrey and John. The Humphrey of the will of 1822 could reasonably be the Humphrey of this 1792 document. The origin of the Humphrey in the Davis Cemetery, is not so easily explained.

Henry Dickenson, the clerk, married Mary Powell. She is believed to be the daughter of Henry Powell, who died in Raleigh Parish, Amelia County, Virginia. (8) According to DAR records, the marriage took place in 1768, but I know of no documentation for this. (9) We know from tombstone data that Henry was born 29 November, 1750 and died 5 July, 1825.

James Dickenson was said to be the youngest son. We know his birth date from the census, (10) and legend says he lived to be 96 years old. He was born in 1764 and died in 1860, probably early in the year before the census was taken. He married Rosamond Carter. (11)

Elizabeth's birth date is unknown at this time. She married John Hawkins, who pre-deceased her. (12) Her descendents state she went with her two sons, John and Phillip, to Madison County, Kentucky, where she died. She married second, George Linder. (13)

Mary (Mollie) Dickenson, of the bright red hair, was said by her descendents to have been born in 1747. (14) She married Henry Hamblen of Prince Edward County. She is known to have been killed by the Indians, but the date is uncertain. The family history records 17 August, 1786. According to James Hagy (op. cit. page 76), the first attack on Mary was in 1781, and the following year she was killed in a second attack. Mr. Hagy gives as reference the pension statement of James Fraley, and Summers' History of Southwest Virginia pp. 365, 367.

Frances (Fanny) Dickenson has been the family celebrity, since her story of capture by the Indians and subsequent escape was newsworthy for 100 years. It was 29 June, 1785 that her husband, Archibald Scott, was killed by the Indians, and the children slain before Fanny's eyes. (15) After her escape, she married Thomas Johnson. An extensive history of Fanny can be found in the files of Dr. Leland B. Tate, Blacksburg, Virginia, a descendant of Fanny.

We can postulate that since the oldest child was 8 years old at the time of her death in 1785 (born 1777), Fanny was born circa 1758, if we make the presumption that she was about 18 years old when she married Archibald Scott. Fanny died 8 (or 9) of May, 1796. (16)

There was at least one more sibling in this family - William Jennings Dickenson - who probably never saw Western Virginia. (17) His will is found in Prince Edward County, 1781, in which he leaves his real estate to his father Henry Dickenson, and his personal property to his mother, Agnes. It is as-



sumed he was unmarried. (18)

All of these children, with the possible exception of James, were born in Louisa County, Virginia, as will be shown. It is a mistake to say they were born in Prince Edward County. There were children of Henry Dickenson and Agnes Jennings.

We have no marriage date for Henry Dickenson and Agnes Jennings. The Jennings family of Hanover and Nottoway Counties, have kept records which state that Agnes was born in 1729 (19) — that she was born in 1727, (20) in Hanover County, Virginia. Her father owned large acreages of land in several Virginia counties, and descendants have traced the family back to the 1500's in England.

Of Henry's birth we have no record, but we know he was born in Caroline County, Virginia, apparently at a time when this section was still a part of King William County. He is reported to have had at least 7 siblings. (21) His father was Thomas Dickenson, who left a will in Caroline County in 1734, which has not been preserved. (22) The author made inquiry in the Caroline County Court House and the State Library at Richmond. We know that Henry was left a homestead of 466 acres in Louisa County.

According to the land patents of Louisa County, Thomas Dickenson got 1,000 acres of land on Elk Creek 17 August, 1725, on both sides of the Overton Fork of the Elk Creek. (Although listed as Louisa County, this area was in Hanover County in 1725). Henry's legacy was part of this land patent.

Henry and Agnes sold this land, together with "the houses and appurtenances thereto belonging, the same is the land given and bequeathed by the last will and testament of Thomas Dickarson, late of the County of Caroline (dec'd) unto his son Henry, relation being had to the county court of Caroline, it will more fully appear." This land was sold to Griffith Dickarson. (23)

Louisa County was formed from Hanover in 1742. It would appear then, that the Jennings family lived near the Dickenson holdings in Louisa, which would explain how Henry met Agnes Jennings. Judging from such birth dates as we have of their children, they were probably married in the 1740's, about the time the area was changed from Hanover to Louisa.

Whether this legacy to Henry was raw land or developed by Henry and Agnes, we do not know. In either event, it was definitely a homestead when Henry decided to sell it in 1765.

Why he wanted to leave and go to Prince Edward County is an unsolved puzzle. No land grant for Henry in Prince Edward County has been discovered. We do know that Henry served in what was called the "Indian Militia" in 1754 (24) On 17 September, 1758 Henry was paid 5 shillings for furnishing provisions for the militia, and was still on the military roster at that time. (25) This was the era of the French and Indian Wars, and lands were sometimes granted for military service. The government had no money to pay the militia, and in fact, many men refused to serve. The Indians were such a peril



that men would not leave their families unprotected to join the militia. (26) The only recompense that could be offered militia men was land.

A record of such a grant may exist, but the author has not found it. Land patents were being given by King George II of England in Prince Edward County in 1745 and 1763. (27) But there is little reason to suppose that Dickensons would receive land from such a source. They were already an "old family in the colonies," and not likely to come under the notice of the King of England.

In searching the deeds of Prince Edward County, the first entry concerning Henry Dickenson was on 18 July, 1774, at which time he deeded 133 acres of land on the Sandy River to his son William. (Bounded on one side by land of Archelaus Dickenson). (28) On the same day, Henry sold John Maddox 150 acres on a fork of the Sandy River (on Owens and Womack's line). (29)

In other words, Henry is selling land, and has seemingly already given land to Archelaus, though we have not learned how or where or when he got the land. However, some of the early records of Prince Edward County were destroyed in the War between the States. We do not know whether Henry removed his family before or after the sale of the Louisa property, which makes it problematical where James was born.

We can deduce that Henry sent some of his children to school in Louisa County. We find from the records that one Philip Cosby taught a private community school in the vicinity of Elk Creek. Philip died in 1763, and among those indebted to his estate were:

Henry Dickenson 1 pound 19s. 0 d.

Griffith Dickenson 1 pound 19s. 0 d.

for seven months and 16 days schooling. (30)

This does not tell us which child was the pupil. But we can deduce that Henry, who later became Clerk, and who was 13 years old at the time of Philip Cosby's death, quite probably, at one time or another, was a student in this school. With the Dickenson farmstead and the school both on Elk Creek, the inference is strong.

We have no definite information on the religious affiliations of the family. For many years Dickensons were members of the Baptist Church known as Goldmine (on a Creek by that name) in Louisa County. But their surviving records begin in 1770, and the family under discussion was by then, presumably, in Prince Edward County. We do have some reason to believe they were not Presbyterians. Church records of Old Briary are available, and no Dickensons are listed. (31) The author knows of no early records in Washington County to indicate the church affiliations of the family.

We believe Agnes Jennings Dickenson died in 1785. A census was taken in that year in Prince Edward County, in which Henry Dickenson is shown with 3 whites in his family, 1 dwelling and 4 other buildings. Family legend



says that after Agnes died, Henry went to live with James, his youngest son, in Russell County, and took along 20 slaves. It is likely the census was taken early in the year, because we find in Washington County, under the date of 8 December, 1785, "Henry Dickinson, late of Prince Edward County," gave his daughter Fanny one negro slave named Benjamin "I lent to Nathaniel Scott." This places Agnes' death as some time in 1785. We have no record of Henry's death. The last court entry is that quoted above in which Henry Dickenson gave the slave to John, son of Humphrey — 21 August, 1792.

Henry's father, as has been shown by the deed in Louisa County referred to above, was Thomas Dickenson. We do not know who Thomas married. T. E. Campbell, in his book on Caroline County, stated that in 1744 Sarah Dickenson renounced the will of Thomas Dickenson because her legacy was less than her dower.(32)

In the Caroline County Order Book 1740-46, on page 457 is the case of summons in dower between Sarah Dickason, widow, plaintiff and Wm. Daniel, the Younger, defendant (March 1744/45). This case came up in the May court (page 472) and was continued. It came up again the following September (p. 533) and was again continued. On December 13 Sarah Dickerson posted her bond to Wm. Daniel, proved by the oaths of Samuel Bowdre, John Williams and John Bushell (p. 545). The next day, Saturday, December 14, the action in dower between Sarah Dickason, plaintiff and Wm. Daniel, defendant was dismissed, being agreed. (p. 553).

There is nothing here to show that Sarah Dickason (Dickenson) is the widow of Thomas. She is merely styled as a widow, and we have no knowledge as to how many "Widow Dickensons" were in the area in 1744. In any event, Thomas' will was filed in 1734, and ten years would be pretty late to protest a will.

T. E. Campbell was a native of Caroline County and knew the people. He might have had records not available to the general public, to state that "Thomas Dickenson had 8 children in 9 years. (p. 47). But if Mr. Campbell knew that Thomas' widow was Sarah, such record is not available to us.

The action in dower, which seems to indicate that this Sarah was a Daniel before her marriage. Genealogies of Virginia Daniels have been searched for a Sarah who married a Dickenson, but without result. The matter of Thomas' wife bears further study, but at present we have no presumptive evidence to identify her.

We are reaching back now to an era when records are sparse, and proof is difficult. We are told by C. W. Cram, in his book "Gods, Graves and Scholars," that hypothesis belongs to the working method of any science: it is a legitimate form of speculation proceeding from established results. However, the hypothesis must be based on established results — in other words, also on documents — and not "wandering in the wild blue yonder." Wharton Dickenson did just this, falsifying data and foisting a fraudulent genealogy on Dickenson descendants. Unfortunately, it is muchly referred to and widely disseminated.



As has clearly been shown above, one cannot accept statements in books, but must refer back to the documents which they purport to interpret. Ray S. Worth, in his book on Tennessee Cousins, contains errors on Dickensons, which have been used without checking the original source. Statements in books have often been in error, and it is not permissible to use books to build a genealogy: only documents.

With this in mind, we begin the search for the forebears of Thomas Dickenson, and lacking records which have been destroyed, we must proceed to gather existing facts and project a probable theory.

Examining the land grants of Caroline County, we find that the Dickensons have grants in St. Margaret's Parish:

1717 Thomas Dickenson, 390 acres on the North Anna at the mouth of Hawkins Creek.

1717 Griffin Dickenson, 400 acres on the North Anna, above Thomas Dickenson's grant.

1725 William Dickenson, 400 acres — North Anna.

1726 Thomas Dickenson, 400 acres — North Anna.

1727 William Dickenson, 400 acres — North Anna.

1728 Griffin Dickenson, 400 acres — North Anna.

We know that Caroline County was formed in 1727 from King and Queen, King William and Essex Counties. Hence these grants were mostly made prior to the time the area was officially known as Caroline.

The next record we find preceding, are the Quit Rents of 1704. Here we find:

Dickason, Thos. King Wm. County 100 acres.

Dickason, Wm. King Wm. County 100 acres.

One would assume that the Thomas who had 100 acres in King William County in 1704 is the same Thomas who got 390 acres in 1717, and he acquired more land in the same area — since it was the boundary line that put him in Caroline when it was "pinched off" of King William County.

Are there two brothers living in the area in 1704 (William and Thomas) who are joined by a younger brother, Griffith at a later date?

Was some of this land retained in King William County? In 1731, among the tithables of that County was listed: Thomas Deekens.(33)

We have entries in King William County concerning William. Most of the records were destroyed by fire in 1885. We do find that in 1704 Phillip Whitehead sued the estate of John Pettivor, dec'd, and the Commissioners were Thos. Spencer, Thos. Butler and Wm. Dickinson.(34)

From the sparse records photographed and placed in the Virginia State Library, is a volume of papers between 1702 and 1707 of King William County. On page 372 is an entry showing that Wm. Dickason and Abraham Willaroy bought a lot of ½ acre in Delaware Town on 20 day of June, 1707,



for which they paid 482 pounds of tobacco. The witness signatures are torn off.

In another volume of salvaged papers for the years 1721-1722, is a fragment of a deed in which Nathaniel Dickinson conveys 78 acres of land to Rich. Watts. This instrument is torn and mutilated, but the sum of 20 pounds is mentioned, and "yearly rent of one pepper corn at the feast of St. Michael - - be demanded to the intent that by virtue of these presents - - the said Rich. Watts may be in actual possession of these premises." Nathaniel also says this is land of which he is "rightfully seized." It is attested 15 day of February in the Seventh Year of the Reign of . 1721 was the seventh year of the reign of George I.

This is somewhat curious. In no other records do we find Nathaniel was granted any lands, and there was so many missing records of Quit Rents that we have no information on how Nathaniel acquired this land. But he says he is "rightfully seized."

Can we assume that Nathaniel does not like King William County, and has decided to sell out and go elsewhere? Is he related to the other Dickensons who apparently do like this area? We do not know where Nathaniel went, but we do find that a Nathaniel Dickenson died in Louisa County in 1753, and he left one of his plantations to his son, Griffith.(35) We can look upon this as presumptive evidence that the Nathaniel who made the will was related to Griffith Dickenson of King William or Caroline County.

We note from the entry of the will of Thomas Dickenson on 13 June, 1734, that it was presented by Griffeth Dickerson and Thomas Dickerson, the executors, and that it was proved by the witnesses James Garland and James Dickerson.(36) It would seem that Griffith is Thomas' brother, and that the other executor is the son of the deceased. We have no clue as to whether James is also a son or not. It seems likely.

As for the Garlands, they took up lands on the opposite banks of the North Anna, in Hanover County. We believe that Dickensons married Garlands. This is shown in later records where we find a Garland Dickenson of Louisa County is an absentee owner of land in Hanover County.(37) Presumably the James Garland who witnessed Thomas' will is a son-in-law.

There are so many Dickenson records in the middle and late 1700's in this general area that it is difficult to make any lineage record that is not specifically stated in documents.

However, let us apply chronology to the records we have found. It is noted that William Dickenson can be placed in King William County in 1704 and again in 1707. But his name does not appear in the land grants of 1717. The name William does not appear in the grants until 1725. In the meantime, we find Nathaniel selling land in 1721 of which he is "rightfully seized," but for which there is no record of a land grant.



It appears then that the William found in 1704 is older than Thomas, and has died between 1707 and 1717, and that a son Nathaniel, who is younger than Thomas, has inherited his land. The William who appears in 1725 is not likely to be the same William of King William County.

Do we then have a William Dickenson, with sons named Thomas, Griffith and Nathaniel? As we go farther back in the records, it can be shown that this is a chronological possibility.

William Elmore Dickenson of West Virginia worked on his family history, in which he states that his James Dickenson was the son of Thomas Dickenson and Susanna Robinson of Caroline County, and that Thomas is a descendant of Griffith Dickenson who patented land in James Cittie County in 1656.(38) William Elmore Dickenson offered no proof of this, and he died in 1915 in Texas.

Griffith Dickenson is a name so common in the 1700's and even up to the present date, that sorting them is no mean task. However, in the 1600's there is only one Griffith Dickenson. Griffith is an uncommon first name, and to be repeated so consistently down the years indicates it is a family name. let us examine the records of the Griffith Dickenson of the 1600's, and try to locate an earlier link than 1717.

We find that Griffith Dickinson is named as a member of the New Kent County Militia in 1702.(39) Can we assume that Griffith is younger than Thomas, and served in the New Kent County Militia before going over to join Thomas and William? Other documents we can pursue will also pertain to Dickensons in New Kent County, as will be shown. Was he named for his grandfather?

Let us see what we can find on the Griffith Dickenson in Virginia in the 1600's. He did indeed patent land in Virginia on 5 January, 1656, 300 acres on the southwest side of Moses Creek and on the northerly branch of Tomahack Creek above Nickatorinces quarter, for transporting 6 persons, himself twice, Elizabeth Dickenson, Wm. Jones and Susan Crotch. This, of course is a count of 5, not 6. The author checked this patent with the originals in Virginia State Library, and it is correct as given above. Therefore, it would seem that his wife Elizabeth is also counted twice.(40) Such grants were given in the amount of 50 acres for each person transported. However, one must not assume that the date of the patent represents the date of arrival. The patent might be based on those who had long since arrived and settled.

This entry does tell us that Griffith had made at least two trips from England before 1656, and the inference is that his wife also made two trips. That she was his wife can also be shown by the records of St. Martin Orgar, London, where the marriage record shows that Griffin Dickenson married Elizabeth Springall on 12 June, 1649.(41) No ages or parents are given in this document. The rate lists show that Thomas Springall was a resident there in this period, but no proof of parentage has been found.(42) We can deduce



that Griffith and Elizabeth came to Virginia any time between 1649 and 1656, for the first time.

Griffith was apparently not a planter, and seemingly patented the land because he could get it. He was a trader, dealer, speculator or some kind of business man.

In existing records of Surry County, we find the entry "26 June, 1656/7 The balance of the books of Maj. Jno. Westhorpe, dec'd. One of creditors was Griffith Dickenson.(43) On 16 December, 1664 there is the petition of Griffith Dickinson, entreating his friend Capt. Thomas Pittman to petition the court on his behalf and grant an order against John Dolyes(?) estate.(44) Also on 3 May, 1656, Jno. Baldwin and Griffith Dickson have a suit, which they ask Robert Stanton to defer to the next court.(45)

Then we find Griffith pursuing a proposition frowned upon by the authorities. On 10 September, 1663, an Order of the Assembly: Divers persons (5) have erected wares in the Face of the town, contrary to the order of the Assembly. Each was assessed a fine of 2,000 pounds of tobacco and cask. One of these culprits was Griffith Dickenson.(46)

Commentators like McIlwain, familiar with the terminology then current, states that wares refers to weirs, which was the term used for a dam. These five men seem to have built a dam in the James River, at or near Jamestown, which in some way upset the order of things. They obviously did not believe their project would have deleterious effects, but the event proved them wrong.

His business deals must have been profitable. The Assembly apparently knew these men could pay a stiff fine. They probably also had to stand the expense of tearing down the dam.

We do not know the date of Griffith's death, but we know it was before 1673. We find this entry: 28 May, 1673, The difference between Tho. Wilkinson as marrying the relict of Griffith Dickeson, and Wm. Towne, is referred to the next county court of New Kent, who are to determine the difference.(47)

Who is Wm. Towne, and what does he have to do with the widow's property? Did Wm. Towne marry a daughter of Griffith and Elizabeth, and is trying to get some of Griffith's estate out of the hands of her step-father, Thomas Wilkinson? Did any sons come into this litigation? We do not know, because the records of New Kent County have been destroyed.

The last record we had on Griffith was 16 December, 1664, in Surry County. He may have died in the late 1660's. Since we know the marriage took place in 1649, we now see why Thomas, Griffith and Nathaniel are not likely to be the sons of Griffith, but presumably grandsons. And this would tie in with the presumption that William of King William County is their father. If William was born in the early 1650's and died after 1707, he would



have lived a reasonable life span. But to presume that Nathaniel, who died in 1753 is a child of Griffith of Virginia, would be, though not impossible, yet improbable.

Having located the family in New Kent County, where Griffith's estate is to be adjudicated, we look for other entries that might be significant. On the April 16, 1684 charges and levies of New Kent County, John Diggason is awarded 21 pounds of tobacco for carrying a letter to Lt. Story. On Thursday 28 October, 1686, in a letter submitted by the clerks to their Lordship, one of the members of the Custom Commission is Wm. Dickinson.(48) The names John and William are too common to assign without proof. But we can bear in mind, since we have still another entry that may or may not be significant. In the next century we find the will of Wm. Morris of New Kent County, filed on 25 January, 1745/6, naming among his heirs, his daughter Eliza Dickenson and his grandsons John and Arthur Dickenson.(49)

We do not know Griffith's origin. In the parish of St. Martin Orgar where he was married in London, no Dickenson families can be found in the records for that period. Considerable work has been done on English records, without finding a clue.

That he was the son of Jeremiah Dickenson, who came over in 1620, can now be disproved. Jeremiah patented land in James Cittie County in 1636 and 1638.(50) There are two entries in the records concerning these lands.

"10 April, 1651 to Robert Taylor, 500 acres in James Cittie County on the Chippoakes, beginning at Swan Bay and north toward the river mouth, formerly granted to Jeremy Dickenson by patent dated 6 May, 1638, and granted to said Taylor by order of the Governor and Council 24 October, 1650, in the right of his wife, the daughter-in-law of said Dickenson."(51)

In other words, there is no male claimant to Jeremiah's land. Nomenclature of the day was not consistent with ours, so that we do not know whether Robert Taylor's wife was a daughter of Jeremiah, or possibly his widow. But the claimant is not a male bearing the name of Dickenson. The other entry is:

"Surry Co. Va. 22 June 1668. Tho. Ludwell Esq., Escheator General. Writ 5 Oct. 1667 to enquire what lands Jeremiah Dickeson was at the tyme of his death seized of. Jury find that Jeremiah Dickinson was at the time of his death seized of 500 acres in James Citty County (but now called Surry) upon Upper Chipoakes Creeke, comonly known by the name of Swan Bay, which became due unto Jeremiah Dickinson by patt. 6 May 1638 and that Jeremiah Dickenson made noe will, neither is there any heire in the country. We give verdict that the 500 acres is escheated."(52)

Our records show that Griffith's widow, if not Griffith himself, was in the colony in 1667 and 1668. Obviously the old records which claim the Dickensons descend from Jeremiah, are in error.

The search continues for some document showing the origin of Griffith. Dickensons have ever been prolific as well as adventurous, as is evident to



anyone who has made much of a study of English records pertaining to them. In the 1600's they were by no means all living in England, as can be seen by examining the records of Bermuda, West Indies, and New England. A Thomas Dickenson was in Charleston, South Carolina as early as the 1600's. It is no easy problem to locate Griffith's origins.

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## BRIEF HISTORY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY

*By H. Claude Pobst*

The American Heritage Map of the location of the homes of Indians show no tribe permanently occupying Western Virginia. The Shawnees were in Ohio, the Cherokees in Western North Carolina, and East Tennessee, and the Xuala in South Western Virginia. They were probably run out by the Cherokees about 1525-50.

I find in Summer's 'History of Southwest Virginia' most excellent account and explanation of the Indians of the entire section. It is his belief that the earliest Indians occupying any part of this section were the Xuala. Mr. Summers definitely believed that De Sota visited the upper reaches of the Holston River, perhaps into Washington County, in 1540. A tradition exists among the Cherokees that the Xuala was driven from the section after 1540 by the Cherokees, but no authentic information can be established as to this. In 1671, Gov. Berkeley sent Capt. Henry Batte with a company of Rangers who crossed the Blue Ridge into Floyd County, and in that section they found Indians living who were said to be remnants of that Tribe, but by 1685 they were all gone. The Shawnees were westward, in Ohio, and perhaps never made many inroads into the present Southwest Virginia. We must, therefore, accept the theory that the Cherokees were the only Indians in our section, immediately prior to the coming of the white man.

But the vast area embracing the Holston, the headwaters of the Kentucky, the Cumberland and the Big Sandy Rivers, seems to have never been permanent abode of any Indians. One reason was the enmity between the Shawnees and the Cherokees, it being bitter enough to deter either Tribe from such a permanent settlement. It was the buffer section separating the two tribes. This condition continued perhaps until rather close to the year 1800, or only about 160 years ago.

~~As late as 1768, the last great battle between two Indians tribes was fought in Tazewell County.~~ Early in the summer of that year about 200 Cherokee Indians camped at a lick to spend the summer in hunting. I am firmly convinced that this place was what is now called Four Ways, two miles east of Tazewell. The Martingale Restaurant is located on this land. Since perhaps considerably before 1850 this land has been owned by the Peery family. When I was a boy it was owned by Capt. Edd Perry, a Confederate soldier. He died about 1900 or before that, and about that date his land was partitioned among his heirs. There were five of them and their father had left them 1050 acres of the finest blue grass land on earth. At the Chicago World Fair in 1892 his sod was awarded the first prize. It was on this farm that "Sweet Alice Ben Bolt" was written. Mr. G. A. Martin, a young lawyer from Norfolk, visited this farm and when I was a very young boy I remember that he married the only daughter of Capt. Edd. He found many, many artifacts left by the Indians, paid boys to hunt them for him, later mounted them in a large glass case, and I bought the entire lot from him during the last years of his life. I have them in my office, and will be glad to show them to anyone in-



terested. There are about 1700 to 1800 of them, mounted according to the Smithsonian method.

But to continue my story about the last great battle between Indian tribes in this section: Later in the summer of 1768 several hundred Shawnee Indians appeared and their chief sent to the Cherokees a demand that they immediately leave. The answer of the Cherokees was defiant, and both sides began to prepare for battle. The Cherokees retired to the top of Rich Mountain, about six or seven miles distant, near to or perhaps partly on the farm now owned by Judge F. W. Smith, and there during the night threw up a breastwork several hundred yards long and three or four feet high. The battle lasted three days, but in the end the Shawnees retired.

No permanent Indians villages seem to have ever been found in this section. I cannot believe that Buchanan County was ever so settled by the Indians, because the mountains were steep, rocky, covered with forest trees, and had no rich soil which would grow good grass to feed deer, as the fields of Tazewell, Russell, Washington, Smythe and Wythe counties would. Hence, it was merely a place where roving bands of Indians would come to fish and hunt for short periods of time and as a passway from the grass fields of Kentucky to the grass fields of the Clinch and Holston rivers. No doubt Short's Gap was frequently used as a passway from the Levisa to the Clinch waters, but no Indian stayed in this county very long. There was no reason for so doing.

Just when the first white man came to what is now Buchanan County is not known. There is no doubt but that white settlers came to the county and settled here many years before they bought any land. The country was rough, steep, wild, no roads, no pasture or grass lands. A man could bring his family, clear some land, build a log hut, and would have to pay nothing for it.

The land at first belong to the State of Virginia and the only way a person could acquire title to it was to obtain a grant from the Commonwealth. Also, by a statute passed by the legislature, a person settling on land, using and possessing it for five years and paying taxes on it at any time during said five years, would have the title of said land. If he went before the Court and proved those facts, the Court would enter an order so stating, whereupon by statute the Commonwealth's title to said land would be relinquished to him.

After the Revolutionary War, mostly during the seventeen nineties, the State of Virginia, owning all the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, or claiming same by virtue of settlement in the name of the King of England, granted huge tracts of land to those furnishing aid to the colonies during that war. As practically all the lands east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, including perhaps all of the Valley of Virginia, had already been taken up by settlers, these large grants were issued of land lying in the main Allegheny Range of Mountains. The better lands in Tazewell, Russell, Washington, Giles, Smythe and Wythe counties had likely been so taken up. But west and northwest of Tazewell and Russell counties in what is now Dickenson, Buchanan and parts of Wise Counties, in Virginia (and Mercer, Raleigh, McDowell, Mingo and



Logan counties in West Virginia) where the lands were less valuable, there remained hundreds of thousand of acres of land still owned by the state.

Those of such large grants which covered parts of Buchanan county were:

(1) 59 grants in the name of Richard Smith, issued in 1787, totaling 387, 723 acres, covering the southern half of the county from the mouth of Big Prater Creek up the river, later acquired by the Warders.

The Warders kept the taxes paid on their lands, and about 1860 began to sell these lands to citizens at 10 cents per acre; the price finally got to \$1.00 per acre and all were sold.

(2) 200,000 acres to Richard Smith and Henry Banks in 1795, about 156,000 acres of which were located in Buchanan County, covering the town of Grundy, down to the Kentucky line, and up to Big Prater. This was the subject of an immense law suit, beginning in 1914, with about 1450 defendants. It was fought all the way from the U. S. District Court to the U. S. Supreme Court. The citizens won. I have a complete set of the records of this case, covering about 3500 pages, 1342 pages of which consisted of briefs.

Plaintiffs were represented by S. B. Avis, U. S. Congressman from Charleston, West Virginia, and Jeffries & Jeffries of Norfolk, Virginia and defendants by:

E. M. Fulton  
Wm. H. Wertt  
G. W. St. Clair  
G. C. Burns  
Geo E. Penn  
Hager & Stewart  
Chase & Daughtery  
Chapman, Perry & Buchanan  
A. S. Hig  
Greever & Gillespie

(3) 500,000 acre grant to Robert Morris, issued in 1795, covering perhaps 50,000 of Buchanan County, and extending into Pike County, Boone, Logan, Wyoming and McDowell counties. Morris was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

The 500,000 acres grant was forfeited by the State of West Virginia for taxes for the years 1883 to 1894. In 1893 one Henry C. King, of New York and California, acquired legal title for said 500,000 acres of land. In October 1897, the Supreme Court of the U. S., speaking by Mr. Justice Harlan (171 U. S. P. 404) upheld the forfeiture of the land to the State of West Virginia, thereby upholding the title of the citizens. That suit dealt only with the part of the coal in West Virginia, but Virginia also had forfeiture laws for non-entry of land for taxes. Finally, in 19 ....., in order to avoid expensive litigation, W. L. Dennis bought from King all that part of the 500,000 acres of land lying in Virginia, being 38,781 acres, for \$29,000, as much of it covered



land owned by Dennis on the Tug River drainage of Buchanan County. Also Ritter Lumber Company and others obtained such deeds- perhaps \$100,000 in all.

The foregoing were known as blanket grants, because they covered so much territory. Also, in the late eighteen nineties and for ten or fifteen years into the nineteen hundreds, the people of the county were troubled with forged and bogus grants, but they were finally obliterated by Mr. W. L. Dennis, the Clerk of the Court, who refused to admit to record deeds emanating therefrom.

The oldest small grant issued to anyone who might have settled thereon, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was an 180 acre grant issued to James Catesby Madison and others, devisees of Rev. James Madison. The survey on which the grant was based is dated December 24, 1783, and the grant was issued March 2, 1856. Richard Yates was the father of Almarine and Richard Yates, and he conveyed to Robert Looney, the father of Charlie Looney.

Another old grant was issued to Frederick Stiltner in 1827, on survey dated in 1821. It was a long narrow grant, beginning below the mouth of Little Prater Creek, and running up the river for a mile or two.

Around 1850 the Warders began to sell land to citizens, and junior grants lying within the 200,000 acre and the 500,000 acre grants were issued in increasing numbers, as settlers became more numerous.

My investigations lead me to believe that the first permanent settler of Buchanan was Frederick Stiltner. When I first came to the county to live in January 1919, I talked to Christopher Stiltner who, as I recall, stated he was a grandson of Frederick. Basil Stiltner, long employed in the office of the Commissioner of the Revenue at Grundy, and who is now 74 years of age, states the original Frederick, as a very young man, shipped as a stowaway on a boat bound from Hamburg, Germany, to Norfolk; nearly starved, he had to show himself at last. After landing at Norfolk, he joined the British army as a paid Hessian Soldier. He did not like it, deserted and went west to reach the mountains where the British could not find him. He was also no doubt avoiding the American troops. He finally reached Swords Creek in Russell County, and spent a few weeks with a widow and her two children. He left there and crossed Sandy Ridge, down Levisa River to the lower end of the present town of Grundy, and spent the winter in a hollow poplar tree which had blown down. Returning to the widow in the spring he married her and brought her and children back and they built a small log hut near the poplar tree. In 1827, based on a survey dated in 1821, he obtained a grant for 124 acres of land extending along the river from below Little Prater Creek nearly to Vansant.

I am strongly inclined to believe that there were two Frederick Stiltners, a Senior and a Junior, and that the Senior was the one who came from Germany. Basil may have confused the two. The boy who came over in 1777 was perhaps 17, and so was born about 1760. Christopher was born in 1835,



and it was not likely that his father was sired by a Frederick who was then about 75. It is more likely that his father was Frederick, Jr. And further, it is my recollection that Christopher told me it was his grandfather, not his father, who came from Germany. Otherwise, the story told me by Christopher and Basil are the same.

One of the Fredericks in 1832 conveyed his 124 acre grant to John Yates. Hannibal A. Compton, former Commissioner of the Revenue of the county, says in his history written for the 1958 Centennial, that Robert Looney came first to the county, and then Joseph and John Looney in 1823. In some of the histories it is stated that the Looneys came from Boutetourt County, Virginia, but other writers say they came from Tazewell County. I am inclined to believe that they came from Boutetourt to that part of Tazewell County which afterwards became Buchanan County.

Another very early settler was Milton Ward who, with all of his family and some ten to fifteen negroes, came from Bowen's or Ward's Cover in Tazewell County, and settled at the mouth of Bill Young Branch of Dismal. In 1850 he obtained 3 grants, and in 1873 he bought a large tract of land from the Warders, supposed to be about three thousand acres, for which he paid \$200.00. A large family of Wards now live in that section of the county. His slaves all remained with his family, and are buried in the family graveyard. The old log house stood until recent years, and the site is now occupied by Tom Ward's widow.

The Colemans, ancestors of Marjorie Coleman (my law partner at Grundy), were also very early settlers of the county. Miss Coleman's father and mother were both Colemans, distantly related. Incidentally, her father's kinfolk were Confederate sympathizers while her mother's were Northern sympathizers. Miss Coleman states that her information is that four brothers settled in Buchanan County who were from eastern Virginia and, while she does not know the date they came, her mother's father, Daniel B. Coleman, was born in Buchanan County about 1830, on the right fork of Paw Paw. It seems reasonable to believe that the family must have come to the county very early, certainly in the first quarter of the 19th century. One of the four brothers, Peter, settled farther up into the county, on Bull or Poplar Creek. Another brother, Richard D. Coleman, settled on Home Creek and was killed by William McClanahan during the Civil War. Richard D. Coleman patented many thousand acres of land in the county, but I am unable to locate any grant earlier than 1835.

By 1860, two years after the founding of the county, the population was 2800; in 1870, 3700; in 1880, it was 5700; in 1890 it was 5900; in 1900, 9700; in 1910 it was 12,300; in 1920 it was 14,400; in 1930 it was 16,700; in 1940 it was 31,500; in 1960 it was 36,724. The present number of school children is approximately 10,396. There are 6 high schools in the county and school property is valued at over five million.



In 1962 the total assessed value of all real estate, including public service corporations in the county, is \$7,950,000, and of personal property, \$7,916,000, making a total valuation of all properties \$15,916,000. When the last reassessment of lands was made in 1958, it was endeavored to assess all real estate at ten percent of its value, but total personal and real property is probably assessed at less than one-tenth of their values, so that the present total values of all properties in the county would probably be in the neighborhood of \$170,000,000.

In fixing these values, no account has been taken of the underwater level coal, being the Pocahontas measures. The total area of these measures would be in the neighborhood of 150,000 acres. In some places as many as three mineral seams of coal have been found by diamond drilling. These seams are the famous Pocahontas No. 3, Pocahontas No. 4, and in addition in some places a third seam, its exact classification at this time not being known, and referred to as a bastard seam, but perhaps covering a considerable area. A rough estimation of such underwater level coal in the county, in my opinion, is around one billion tons. Island Creek Company has leased one area of its holdings, totaling about 9300 acres. It has five other such areas, while Pittsburgh Consolidated owns about two such areas, and the Pittston Company and other interests would own about one such area or more. The lease now being developed on the Island Creek holdings will mine about 1,200,000 tons of coal per year. At that rate, if all the underwater level coal were now leased, and the mining in each area would produce about the same amount of coal per year, it would take in the neighborhood of one hundred years to mine it all. And during this hundred years, around ten millions of tons of coal per year would be mined, the selling price of which would likely be around fifty to seventy millions of dollars each year. These figures apply only to the underwater level coal.

The above water level coal consists of the Cary or Lower Banner, the Clintwood (both nearly exhausted), the Blair, Glamorgan, Hagy, two seams of Raven Red Ash (Jewell Ridge seam is one of them, and around Grundy they are called the Widow Kennedy and the Grundy Seams), the Splashdam, Jaw Bone and the Tiller. Many of them are being heavily mined and have been for the past ten to twenty years, and I would say they are about half exhausted. They are much thinner than the Pocahontas measures and of poor quality. At present Jewel Smokeless Coal Corporation is constructing 210 coke ovens, just above the highway bridge across Dismal River eight miles above Grundy. It will ship about a quarter of a million tons of high grade coke, beginning next year. The Aetna Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Conn., thought so much of the venture that it lent to the operating company last spring the total sum of \$2,350,000, when the company owned none of the coal, only operated under leases. Its present tipple and processing plant is located almost wholly on leased property.

In August, 1962, the Buchanan Branch of the Norfolk & Western shipped a whopping record of 20,046 cars of coal. The average daily shipment of coal from the county is about 925 cars at 60 tons to the car. The coal shipped would be around twelve to thirteen million tons per year, at average sale price



of about \$3.60 per ton, the total value of coal shipped would be about \$45,000,000 per year. These are accurate figures of coal shipments obtained a week ago from our Trainmaster, Robert Y. Cook. About 25% of all coal shipped from the entire Norfolk & Western combined system comes from Buchanan County.

Something like a hundred years ago, or perhaps more, the Virginia and Kentucky Turnpike was constructed from a point west of Tazewell, across Sandy Ridge, into Buchanan County, and on into Kentucky. This route was used by a Union general during the Civil War. With some five thousand troops, he traveled up the Levisa River and into Tazewell, intending to reach and destroy the salt works and shot tower in Wythe and Smythe counties. The Confederates stopped them before they had done damage, thus avoiding a most disastrous loss. Evidently, but little work was done on this road thereafter.

On my first trip to Grundy, in 1906. I went on the N. & W. to Bluefield, Devon, W. Va., and there spent the night. Next morning we went up Knox Creek to Hurley on the Big Sandy & Cumberland Railroad to Hurley, and thence by mule pack up Lester's Fork, down Elkins Branch to Grundy. The only other access into the county was by horseback from Raven across Sandy Ridge, and down Levisa to Grundy. In about 1908 the B. S. & C. was extended to Matney, nine miles up Slate Creek from Grundy, so thereafter the entire trip from Devon could be made to Grundy by that road. The trip from Tazewell took some 4 to 5 hours to Devon, where one spent the night, and about 5 hours over to Grundy.

In 1923 or 4, the B. S. & C. was bought by the N. & W. and thereafter rights of way were slowly bought from Devon to Grundy. In 1931 on July 1, the N. & W. ran its first train of standard gauge track into Grundy. It was a great day. In 1935-6, the N. & W. extended its road from Grundy to the head of Dismal Creek.

In 1921-2 about ½ of a mile of improved road was built on the south side of Slate Creek, from a point opposite the high school to a point on Slate Creek just below the Mountain Mission School.

In 1923 construction on the present Route 460 was begun, beginning just below Little Prater Creek. It was completed, that is the grading, about 1930 or 1931. It was not hard surfaced for many years.

Until about 1908, all supplies and food not raised in the county were hauled by wagon from Raven to Grundy. Time consumed was about three days for the trip over, loading and back. After the B. S. & C. was extended to Slate Creek, the supplies came that way.

About 1915, a small electric dynamo was erected on the present sight of Jackson Hardware Company, which was operated by steam generated by coal. The lights were turned on about dark and turned off promptly at 10:00



p.m. In case of a party, the fireman would run an extra two hours for \$5.00. The lights were inadequate, and no power equipment was run by the electricity so produced. In 1923, an electric power line was run from McDowell County across Buchanan to Dickenson where it supplied mines of the Clinchfield Coal Corporation. It crossed to the north of Grundy, and crossed the Levisa River just above the mouth of Looney's Creek, at the present substation. In 1925, a branch line was run from the substation to the town of Grundy and, since then, we have had adequate electric power and lighting.

After the railroad was constructed through the county, prosperity came and for the most part increased by leaps and bounds. Today the only basic asset the county has which will produce money is coal. Were it not for the coal being taken and processed in the county, starvation, misery and want would result in a matter of months and the comfortable, well-equipped, and modern homes now lived in and enjoyed by the people of the county would soon become unoccupied and the values thereof would rapidly disappear.

In my opinion, we are assured of a substantial living from our coal for the next 100 and perhaps to 150 years. After that, what? The only other basic asset which we have ever had was our fine coverage of timber. At the end of 100 to 150 years no merchantable saw timber will be available for manufacturing into lumber, because the people keep the timber cut and removed as fast as it grows into a moderate value. And, after that, what?

Within the past few months, I have noted the modern tendency of the people, young and old, to move away from their old but comfortable homes on tops of the mountains, the heads of the branches, and from other inaccessible places, down to an easier life where their late model automobiles can reach the new homes being built by our people on substantial hard-top roads. I have talked with our agricultural and farm agent and with old citizens of the county. Judging from their opinions and my own observations, there is no doubt these inaccessible lands in the last 15 or 20 years have gradually been abandoned to the growth of blackberry briars, underbrush, sassafras, other small and scrubby trees. Twice within the past month or so, I have had occasion to go over 350 acres of land, the closest boundary line of which is exactly one mile from the courthouse at Grundy. It is owned by a citizen of Grundy who told me that he had not been on the land for 17 years. He was born and reared on this land. He has torn down his father's old home place and five or six tenant houses which were in bad state of repair, to get rid of an undesirable bunch of tenants who paid no rent. In some places the undergrowth is almost impassable. It is fast returning to the state of nature found by the early settlers 75 to 100 years ago.

What shall be done with these old abandoned farms, do you ask me? Frankly, I do not know. No one can clear the land and by cultivating it make enough living on the crops produced therefrom to sustain him and his family. Seemingly, they can do this in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Japan, but not America. We seem to have no one work hard enough to wrest a living from our steep, rocky and wooded mountains.



## THE BOLLINGS OF WISE COUNTY

*By W. S. Rose\**

Of sixty-nine pupils enrolled at Flat Gap public school, at the head of Pound Valley in Wise County, Virginia, all but one were Bollings or their mothers were Bollings. Neighboring schools have the name in lesser proportion.

They do not go to school for nothing either. Their settlement comprises about one-tenth of the Robertson Civil District, which contains fifteen schools, and eight of them were recently taught by Bollings.

The circumstances of the ancestry and early settlement favored a clean-blooded posterity, and it has been agreeably co-operated with by choice for nearly one hundred and twenty-five years. No insanity, epilepsy, idiocy, or hereditary tuberculosis. The result is a keen-witted, selfreliant people able to take care of themselves under any conditions they encounter. They are great people to mind their own business and would rather others do the same.

Environment and heredity, the two prime factors in character-molding, are in this case given the widest possible play, and yet, the age-old debate on which of the two has the greater influence is not settled. Heredity was strong, as will be seen later, and the community started from one family whose members went forth to various Lands of Nod to mate and bring back their mates in most cases, to settle near the parent roof.

The nest was at the head of the valley that somewhat resembles a scoop-shovel, except there is a dividing ridge in the middle throughout the entire distance of ten miles. All around the outer rim, excepting the northeastern end, are mountains. Until very recent times it was greatly isolated from the rest of the world.

Amid such natural surroundings heredity began to play its part. It had a free hand. The first family of children were large enough to remember when the mail came as close as sixty miles, and when it finally came within twenty miles they began to send and receive letters.

They escaped the conventionalities, shallow forms and hypocrisies prevailing in what passed for high society, and the blighting effects of a wasteful labor system then in vogue elsewhere.

They were taught by their parents to read and had no trashy literature to waste time on. Providing for their material wants kept them all busy.

Their history goes back to famous ancestry on both sides, and the temptation is strong to trace the mother's side, but that seems contrary to the accepted custom. Robert Bolling married Jane Rolfe, daughter of Thomas

\*Edited by his grandson, Winfield H. Rose in 1963. This paper may no be reproduced without the written consent of the editor.



Rolfe, who was the son of John Rolfe and the beloved Pocahontas.

Who the Bollings were is not generally known, but all that is necessary here to record about them is that they descended from the Welsh Boleyns, who, in England became Bollings, the most noted of whom was Anne, whose beauty captivated the monster, King Henry VIII, who married her despite all opposition and thus gave to England Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, from which the name Virginia was derived.

To this Robert Bolling and Jane Rolfe Bolling, granddaughter of Pocahontas, only one child was born, John. The mother died and Robert had other children by a later marriage, but the blood of Pocahontas did not course in their veins. It is interesting to note how long the Pocahontas blood was held by a single life because the same thing happened again when the first John had but one son, also called John, who, however, ended all anxiety by fathering nineteen sons, the eldest of whom was Thomas, who himself had a numerous family. He, it was, being prompted by the need for such instruction in his family, procured a teacher from England, which eventually led to the establishment of the first deaf and dumb institution in America.

Under the law of primogeniture then in force, Thomas inherited the entire forty-thousand acre estate, leaving the other eighteen sons of John to scatter or at least, to shift for themselves.

At least one of the brothers went to North Carolina. His name was Benjamin, and among his family of seven sons and three daughters was another Benjamin, who was born in 1734 and was, therefore, two years younger than Washington, with whom he bore arms in the same great conflict, as did his sons by his first wife.

Having lost his first wife, Pattie Felts, he married Charity Larrimore, who bore him one son, Jeremiah, the father of the family on Pound River. And, it was a real family, too, as will be seen later. Other Jeremiahs drop in from time to time, but this Jeremiah was Jeremiah I. He already was married to Sallie Ward of Georgia when he started with his wife and father to the wilderness. Perhaps it would be better to say that Benjamin brought them into the wilderness to found a home.

The son, at least, and the father perhaps also, had scouted the area and knew beforehand in a general way about where they would settle. There were already settlers in the valleys of the Clinch and Powell rivers. Hannah, a sister of Benjamin, had married Solomon Osborne and had come with him into the wilderness and located at a ford on the Clinch River a short distance upstream from where the town of Dungannon now stands. The name Osborne Ford clings to the place to the present.

Because of local interest, a digression is here made to record a statement made by well-informed members of the Bolling family of the upper Pound Valley that Benjamin had a younger brother Jessee, who was a primitive Baptist preacher and came over the mountains bringing with him two boys named



Gilly. After living for a period of time at the forks of the Powell River, where Big Stone Gap now stands, he passed on into Kentucky, leaving his claim and improvements in the possession of these boys. Whether this be true or not, one thing is certain, and that is that the Gillys are very numerous in the locality mentioned, and that they started somewhere and somehow several generations ago.

There were several Johns, John the first, John the second, and John this and John that, but it is not recorded that there was a John the Baptist. But Benjamin evidently was of the same faith as Jesse and must have taught it to his son Jeremiah, for the one church of the locality is close by and the title page of the record book is inscribed "Primitive Baptist Church." The burying ground is near and Benjamin was the first tenant. On a rude stone at the head is inscribed "B. Bolling 1734-1832." He had several grandsons through the son Jeremiah who reached extreme old age, but none quite reached his ninety-eight years. By his side sleeps Charity who braved the wilderness with him. Marks to both graves are the work of Jeremiah.\*

It has not to this day been definitely settled just which of the Carolinas President Jackson was born in, and the descendants of Benjamin and Jeremiah are not sure about which their ancestors came from. They talked much of both states and were, perhaps, so near the line that they spent time in both, as was the case with Jackson. They brought with them across the mountains on their horses small appleseed sprouts set in gourds, and, after planting, they grew and lived long, which might indicate North Carolina was their native state because North Carolina is more adapted to that fruit.

History teaches that land-title troubles were responsible for much of the early migration from western North Carolina, while South Carolina was so organized as to make life difficult for self-reliant and industrious white people; and, from both states there was, in early days, an outwardflowing stream of their bravest and best. Be the cause what it may, one or the other or both states lost when Benjamin brought Jeremiah and Sallie out.\*\* In their new abode the population increases with wonderful regularity. Eleven of the thirteen children of Jeremiah and Sallie reach maturity, and of the two who failed to do so one was killed by a falling tree; and there was not a doctor within a hundred miles.

Of the eleven eight were given Bible names. They follow the dates of birth and death as nearly correct as possible: Jonathan 1806-1866\*\*\*; Jeremiah II, 1809-1894; Ezekiel, 1815-1907; Hosea, 1817-1910; Amos, 1819-1894; James, 1821 with no date of death; Sarah 1823-1862; Dulaney, 1824 with no date of death; Jesse, 1826-1901\*\*\*; Polly\*\*\* who married, became the mother of four children, and passed away, but the date of birth and death was not learned. There has been from the beginning a small migration, mostly to Kentucky, and the missing dates are due to those cases. Most all of the departed sleep in the churchyard of which Benjamin was the first tenant. It is on a low ridge just above the ancestral homestead, and is well fenced and cared for. It contains several times as much standing marble as the average rural burying ground, all of which was hauled over very rough mountain



roads for distances ranging from eighty down to twenty miles, depending on the facilities of transportation at the time of purchase. Perhaps names chiseled on it would range in much the same ratio as the school pupils mentioned in the beginning of this story, for most of these people prefer to live out their lives in the place that Benjamin selected for their nest and where Jeremiah's fledglings peopled it.

To bring the genealogy down past Jeremiah's family would need so many "begats" as to resemble the second chapter of Genesis, and must not be attempted here. Their direct descent from Pocahontas and one other incident which will be related later are the only romantic elements discovered in their story. Only a few of the ninth in descent from the Indian maiden are now living. Taken from narrative form and given directly it is as follows: Pocahontas to Thomas Rolfe, 1st; Thomas Rolfe to Jane Rolfe Bolling, 2nd; Jane Rolfe Bolling to John Bolling 1, 3rd; John Bolling 1 to John Bolling II, 4th; John Bolling II to Benjamin Bolling I, he of the large family, 5th; Benjamin Bolling I to Benjamin Bolling II, 6th; This is the Revolutionary soldier who brought into the wilderness his son Jeremiah, who is the 7th, and his children whose names and dates are given are 8th in line. The Thomas Bolling mentioned was a brother of the first Benjamin and was the sole heir. He was mentioned only because of his connection with the first institution for the deaf and dumb in America. He has no important connection with the Carolina Bollings, who have not, as far as learned, used Pocahontas and John Rolfe in giving names to their children. Mrs. Edith Galt Bolling Wilson and her brother Rolfe Bolling are 9th in descent also, but from another branch of the family, as were the Randolphs, Tuckers and others with whom here are not concerned.

This story, long though it has grown, cannot well be closed without relating an incident that for disappointment and sadness closely approaches the theme in Longfellow's immortal poem of Evangeline's never-faltering search for Gabriel, which has thrilled the hearts of countless millions in many languages and in different lands.

Late in life Sallie Ward, wife of Jeremiah, was seized with a passion to return to the home of her childhood to visit her kindred. Taking with her Hosea, her son, then a lad in his teens, she set out on horseback. This must have been in the eighteen thirties, for we have seen that Hosea was born in 1817. She riding and the lad afoot, over the rough trails they went, fording rivers and streams, lodging when possible with the widely scattered settlers, and often taking the weather as it came. But, at last, the hardships and privations were left behind and with a joyful heart she approached the place she longed to see once more, where she could pour out to her kindred the great story of her life since their separation.

She found not one living kinsman and none who could give any information as to when and where they had gone. The land was still there, but for all practical purposes for her it was as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up. What her feelings were can only be imagined by those who have met with overwhelming and crushing disappointment.



It must have been that the one great sustaining comfort to her as she turned her face to the wilderness was that she at least had a place to return where a welcoming hand would greet her and a friendly roof would shelter her.

A brother of her husband's father had found them as he was outwardly bound from the old homeland to Missouri, but for her, her husband, sons and daughters were all that were left to her. With them she continued to live on until 1845 when her body was laid near the first tenant, to be later joined by her mate, and the twain sleep well in the soil where they labored in the land they loved.

### NOTES

\* The following passage has been omitted from this story for reasons stated below:

"We have seen that Jeremiah's wife was Sallie Ward, born in 1773, two years before Andrew Jackson, with whom she played as a child, and whom she always disliked, not to use a harsher word. After he rose to fame and was idolized by the public she always spoke disparagingly of him."

The previous passage was omitted from the rest of the story because there are some very obvious error in it. First, Jackson was born in 1767, not 1765. Second, if Sallie Ward Bolling was born in 1763 she was about 43 years old when her first child was born, i.e., Jonathan in 1806 or 1807, and she was about 68 years old in 1831 when her last child was born, i.e., Polly in 1831. This obviously, is impossible.

A more probable date was twenty years later, about 1783, which would have placed her about the same age as her husband (see\*\*). This, however, would have placed her much younger than Andrew Jackson, and it is doubtful that they were playmates in childhood.

Third, one historical source, the World Almanac, gives the location of Jackson's birth as New Lancaster County, South Carolina, but the text of this story states that Sallie was born in Georgia. Therefore, it is possible that Sallie Ward never heard of Jackson until he was well-known. One can only speculate, but the editor of this story, after much thought, had decided that the incidents related here about Andrew Jackson and Sallie Ward must be mere folk tales built up as years passed in the Bolling family, because upon talking with present living Bollings in the area, some have said that they can remember their grandfather or uncle, etc., having related the account to them as it was given here. But, as we have seen, it cannot be true.

\*\*The late Hugh L. Sulfridge in his Columbia University Master's thesis gives the date of about 1790 to the migration, and the area from which they came to be Wilkes County, North Carolina. The date 1790 can be questioned



because, since this text states that Jeremiah was married at the time of the migration, it is doubtful that a period of sixteen years would have elapsed before his first child was born. Also, Mrs. Margie Bolling Riddle, great-granddaughter of Jeremiah and granddaughter of Jesse, gives the date of Jeremiah's birth as February 7, 1782. Obviously, an eight-year-old boy would not be married. A more probable date would be 1800 to 1804, and then the other statements would be more logical.

\*\*\*Mrs. Margie Bolling Riddle, mentioned above, of RFD Pound, Virginia, gives these dates for the births of: Jonathan, 1806; Jeremiah II, 1810; and Polly 1831. She also adds the eleventh child, Edmond, born in 1828.



## THE HANGINGS AT GLADEVILLE

(Now Wise)

*By L. F. Addington*

No one knew better the gruesome tales of the hangings at Gladeville than the late Charles Renfro, whom the writer interviewed.

Charles Renfro said:

"When I was made a member of the Wise County Vigilanties back there in 1892, I little dreamed that I was to become the scaffold maker or noose knot tier for all the six men who were to die on the gallows in my country. But it was that way.

The Vigilanties had been organized in Big Stone Gap, Virginia by Josh Bullitt as a protection against the bad men of the hills when the first coal boom came. John Fox, Jr., the author of the Trail of the Lonesome Pine, was a member of the guard, I recollect.

### THE HANGING OF TALT HALL

And when it was *norated*\* around that the desperado Talt Hall, a native Kentuckian, who had been committing crime on the Virginia side of the line for some time, had been jailed for the wanton killing of Enos Hylton, Cheif of Police of Norton, and that his buddies in Kentucky were going to storm the jail and remove him, the volunteer county guard was increased to more than one hundred members.

Josh Bullitt came up from Big Stone and drilled us fellows at the county seat every day. A part would stand guard while the others were drilling. I was made a member of the guard although I was then in my teens.

Talt Hall was tried and sentenced to hang by the neck until he was dead. Then it was that a message came from Kentucky to the effect that some of Talt's friends intended to storm the jail and take him out.

The old jail was none too secure and the judge ordered that Hall be taken to Lynchburg for safe keeping while the higher courts were examining the motion for a retrial on the grounds of a writ of error.

But the higher courts sustained the county court and Hall was sent back to be hanged. His execution date was fixed to be September 2, 1892."

And what a day in the county seat town of Gladeville that was! In order to get the full color the occasion afforded, we herewith leave the narrative of jailer Renfro and switch to an account by John Fox, Jr. in his book "Bluegrass and Rhododendron", page 239.

\*Local corruption of "Narrated".



Fox wrote: "Through mountain and Valley, humanity had talked of nothing else for weeks, and before dawn of the fatal day, humanity started in converging lines from all other counties for the county seat of Wise, — from Scott and from Lee; from wild Dickenson and Buchanan, where one may find white men who have never looked upon a white man's face; from the Pound which harbors the desperados of two sister states whose skirts are there stitched together with pine and pin-oak along the crest of the Cumberland; and, further on, even from the faraway Kentucky hills, mountain humanity had started at dawn of the day before. A stranger would have thought that a county fair, a camp meeting, or a circus was the goal. Men and women, boys and girls, children and babes in arms: each in his Sunday best — the men in jeans, slouch hats and high boots; the women in gay ribbons and brilliant homespun; in wagons and on foot, on horses and mules, carrying man and man, man and boy, lover and sweetheart, or husband and wife and child — all moved through the crisp September air, past woods of russet and crimson and along brown dirt roads to a little straggling mountain town where midway of the one long street and shut in by a tall board fence was a courthouse, with the front door closed and barred, and port holes cut through its brick walls and looking to the rear; and in the rear a jail; and to one side of the jail a tall wooden box with a projecting cross beam in full sight, from the center of which a rope swung to and fro, when the wind moved.

Never had a criminal met death at the hands of the law in that region, and it was not sure that the law was going to take its course now, for the condemned man was a Kentucky feudsmen, and his clan was there to rescue him from the gallows, and some of his enemies were on hand to see that he died a just death by a bullet, if he should escape the noose. And the guard, whose grim dream of law and order seemed to be coming true, was there from the Gap, twenty miles away, to see that the noose did its ordained work.

On the outskirts of town, and along every road, boyish policemen were halting and disarming every man who carried a weapon in sight. At the back window of the courthouse and at the threatening little port holes were more youngsters manning Winchesters. At the windows of the jailer's house, which was of frame and which joined and fronted the jail, were more still, on guard, and around the jail was a line of them, heavily armed to keep the crowd back on the other side of the jail yard fence.

The crowd had been waiting for hours. The neighboring hills were blocked with people waiting. The house tops were blocked with men and boys, waiting.

Now the fatal noon was hardly an hour away, and a big man with a red face appeared at one of the jailer's windows; and then the sheriff, who began to take out a sash. At once a hush came over the crowd and then a rustling and a murmur. It was the prisoner's lawyer and something was going to happen. Faces and gun muzzles thickened at the port holes and the courthouse windows. The line of guards in the jail yard wheeled and stood with their faces upturned to the windows.



There in the sashless window stood a man with black hair — Talton Hall.

He was going to confess — that was the rumor. His lawyers wanted him to confess. The preacher who had been singing hymns with him wanted him to confess. The man himself wanted to confess, and now he was going to confess.

What deadly mysteries he might clear up if he would. His best friends put the list of his victims no lower than thirteen — his enemies no lower than thirty. And there looking up at him, were three women who he had widowed or orphaned, and one corner of the jail yard still another, a little woman in black — the widow of the Norton Constable whom Hall had shot to death only a year before.

Now Hall's lips opened and closed, and opened and closed again. Then he took hold of the side of the window and looked behind him. The sheriff brought him a chair and he sat down.

At last Hall asked that he might give his sister a secret message. The Judge who was also on guard felt obliged to deny the request and then Hall haltingly asked aloud that his sister bring a white handkerchief and tie it around his throat — afterwards — to hide the red mark of the rope. Tears welled in the Judge's eyes. He pulled out his own handkerchief and pressed it into the woman's hands.

But would Talt confess to all the murders he had committed? He had shot Harry Maggard, an uncle. He had killed two brothers-in-law. He had killed Henry Monk, Mack Hall. Through cunning he had escaped punishment. Now he could clear up these cases and many more, if he would.

But he didn't admit any of his crimes. He rose and went out with a firm step. I was one of those assigned to do duty inside the hanging box.

Hall stood as motionless as the trunk of an oak. The sheriff was a very tenderhearted man and a very nervous one, and the arrangements for the execution were awkward. Two upright beams had to be knocked from under the trap door, so that it would rest on the short rope noose that had to be cut before the door would fall. As each of these was knocked out the door sank an inch, and the suspense was horrible. The poor wretch must have thought that each stroke was the one that was to send him to eternity but not a muscle moved. All was ready at last and the sheriff cried in a loud voice, "May God have mercy on this poor man's soul!" and struck the rope with a hatchet. The black-capped apparition shot down, and the sheriff ran, weeping, out of the door of the box."

Now let's go back to Charles Renfro's few last words about Talt Hall. He said, "I put the black hood over Talt's head, and dropped the noose over his head. After he was dead I felt terrible although I knew Talt was a bad man. I sort of hoped I wouldn't have to help hang another one. But destiny didn't let me escape.



## THE RED FOX SAID HE WOULD RISE ON THE THIRD DAY

The second man to be hanged at Wise courthouse while I was yet a member of the court guard." Charles Renfro continued, "was Dr. M. B. Taylor, better known as the Red Fox. It was Doctor Taylor, officiating as U. S. Marshal along with his work as doctor and minister, who trailed Talt Hall from Wise County to Memphis, Tennessee and helped bring him back to justice.

While Hall was yet being guarded in the little jail house Dr. Taylor stole away into the mountains and massacred five people out of a crowd of seven who were crossing Pine Mountain at Pound Gap."

John Fox, Jr. who wrote about Dr. Taylor called him the Red Fox, and here's what he said about him in Bluegrass and Rhododendron: "The Red Fox of the mountains was going to be hanged. Being a preacher, a herb doctor, revenue officer, detective, crook, and assassin, he was going to preach his own funeral sermon on the Sunday before the day set for his passing, which was October 27, 1893. He was going to wear a suit of white and a death cap of white, both made by his little old wife. Moreover, he would have his body kept unburied for three days, saying that, on the third day, he would arise and go about preaching.

On Sundays the Red Fox preached the Word; on other days he was a walking arsenal, with a huge 50X75 Winchester over one shoulder, two belts of gleaming cartridges about his waist, and a great pistol swung to either hip. In the woods he'd wear moccasins with the heels forward, so that no man could tell which way he had gone.

Sometimes he would carry a huge spy-glass, five feet long, with which he watched his enemies from the mountain tops.

One of his enemies was Ira Mullins, a paralytic who lived at Pound. Ira made moonshine liquor and peddled it from a two-horse wagon bed filled with straw. The Red Fox, while a U. S. Marshal, had engaged Ira in a gun-battle. Soon afterwards the word got around that Ira would kill the Red Fox on sight.

So, the crafty Red Fox decided to beat him to it. While guarding Talt Hall, he had heard that on May 14, 1892, Old Ira would bring a load of liquor from Kentucky through Pound Gap.

With two confederates, Henan and Cal Fleming, the Red Fox lay in wait at a small cliff beside the road just south of the Gap.

Ere long the wagon came into sight. A man by the name of John Chappel was in the driver's seat and beside him sat Ira's wife, Louranza. On a pile of straw lay Old Man Mullins, partially propped up. Behind the wagon walked Ira's 14 year old son, John, and a boy named Greenberry Harris. Mrs. Jane Mullins rode horseback. Her husband, Wilson Mullins, walked in front of the wagon.(1)



When the wagon rattled within close range of the small cliff, the Red Fox and his confederates opened fire, killing all in the caravan except Jane Mullins, riding horseback, and Ira's son John who was walking beside her.(2)

The assassins fled into the woods. Mrs. Jane Mullins rode on into Wise, some 18 miles distant, and reported the massacre to Sheriff John Miller.(3) The sheriff organized a posse of 22 men and a manhunt was begun that lasted several days and nights. The Flemings fled to West Virginia and were not apprehended until two years later.(4) The Red Fox returned to his own home in Wise and hid in his attic. Then one night his son Sylvan, a respected businessman and surveyor living in Norton, five miles from Wise, took his father to his home.(5) The son insisted his father leave the mountains and go to Florida, although the son testified in court that his father wanted to stay and stand trial.

The Red Fox decided to take his son's advice and, outfitted in new clothes, mounted an empty boxcar standing in the yard at Norton and rode to Bluefield, West Virginia, from which place he intended to hobo another train going south. But somehow the Wise County Commonwealth Attorney, Robert Bruce, heard the Red Fox's being in a boxcar bound for Bluefield and wired the Baldwin Detective Agency to apprehend him when he left the train. They did and the fugitive was returned to Wise for trial.

Considerable evidence in the trial concerned the Red Fox's Winchester. It had been known that his rifle used rim-fire cartridges. Rim-fire shells had been found at the murder scene. But when the jury examined the gun they found it to be a center-fire. However, upon close scrutiny they saw that the plunger had been cleverly changed to strike the center of a cartridge instead of the rim. They then decided this clever man had tampered with the firing pin."(6)

Now let's go back to John Fox, Jr.'s account of the Red Fox's last hours on earth.

"The Red Fox preached his own funeral sermon on a Sunday before the day set for execution and a curious crowd gathered to hear him. He was led from the jail. He stood on the jailer's porch with a little table in front of him; on it lay a Bible. On the other side of the table sat a little palefaced old woman in black, with a black sunbonnet drawn close to her face. By the side of the Bible lay a few pieces of bread. It was the Fox's last communion — a communion which he administered to himself and in which there was no other soul on earth to join him, except the little old woman in black.

It was pathetic beyond words when the old fellow lifted the bread and asked the crowd to come forward to partake with him in the last sacrament. Not a soul moved, only the little old woman who had been ill-treated, deserted by the old fellow for many years; only she of all the crowd gave any answer, and she turned her face for an instant timidly toward him. With a churlish gesture the old man pushed the bread over toward her, and with hesitating, trembling fingers she reached for it.



The sermon that followed was rambling, denunciatory, and unforgiving. Never did he admit guilt.

On the last day the Red Fox appeared in his white suit. The little old woman in black had even made the cap which was to be drawn over his face at the last moment — and she had made that white too.

He walked firmly to the scaffold steps, and stood there for one moment blinking in the sunlight, his head just visible above the rude box."

Now, for the ending of this gruesome story we switch back to Charles Renfro, who said, "For a moment he stood viewing the rude gallows, and, seeming to believe it would do the job, he suffered his hands to be tied behind him with a white handkerchief. One of the guards spread newspapers on the gallows steps and platform so that not a speck of dirt might touch his shoes.

Once on the platform the doctor requested the privilege of reading a passage of scripture and praying. Down on his knees he prayed in a voice so soft and low that only those very close to him could understand.

Sheriff Charles L. Hughes slipped the white hood over his head and the noose was adjusted about his neck. Jeff Hunsucker, a deputy sheriff, excited because of the curcial moment, jolted the trap in a clumsy effort to cut the trap rope and the doctor crumpled to the floor.

The deputy waited until the doomed man could straighten up again and then he tried his ax a second time.

The trap dropped and the doctor went down with it, a mass of white whirling around and around. The rope twisted tight and then unwound, which kept the struggling man whirling for some time.

When the twisting of the rope stopped the body was left to hang for 19 minutes when Dr. H. M. Miles and Dr. T. M. Cherry examined the body, pronounced it dead, and ordered it delivered to the family.

As was his request, the body was kept up for three days. Some people believed that the doctor would rise again; but on the third day all hopes vanished and the body was interred on a hill above the courthouse square where it now lies without markers."

### FIRST BLACK MAN HANGED

"The first black man to be hanged here was Bob Foy, who killed a commissary clerk at Toms Creek. Foy's wife was away from home and Foy, wanting her return, borrowed enough money from the clerk to purchase train tickets.



The wife, however, decided not to come home and then Foy asked the store clerk to take the tickets as pay for the loan of money. The clerk refused. A fight ensued. The two men tangled on the floor and while they were down Foy shot the clerk.

A speedy trial followed and Foy was sentenced to be hanged July 1, 1902. But before the day of execution arrived Foy broke jail. He'd been kept in the new jail. (Now in 1971 being razed)

Along about this time we had a terrible time at the jail because of an epidemic of smallpox. I was by this time jailer. I was appointed when the regular jailer died of smallpox. It was very much up to me to decide what ought to be done.

I had Foy to hunt and I had to wrestle with the epidemic. We had thirty cases of the disease among the inmates. These we got away to a temporary building some three miles out of town. The rest we moved to the Scott County jail.

Now Foy, although at large, didn't go far. We found him one day down Indian Creek sitting under a tree, waiting for someone to bring him back to jail.

He said he wasn't afraid of smallpox; and he'd rather be hanged than sleep out at night with snakes crawling around. He escaped smallpox but he didn't escape the noose. It caught him July 1, 1902. And he seemed to be glad to get it over with.

### GEORGE ROBINSON HANGED TWICE

Exactly one month from Foy's execution, George Robinson, another black man, was to meet his death by the noose. His execution was set to take place between ten and three o'clock August 1, 1902.

'I was still jailer,' Renfro went on, 'it was again my job to inspect the gallows and get the rope ready. Wib didn't like to release the trap but the job had to be done and he did it.'

That big Negro, as muscular as a prize fighter, calmly stood and without protest allowed the hood to be put over his head and the noose to be drawn about his neck.

But when the trap fell, Robinson went all the way down to the ground. His neck was so tough that the rope broke instead, and the doomed man crumpled upon the ground and still showed no sign of emotion.

The sheriff said he'd get a stronger rope and while he went to get it Robinson walked back up the steps and waited for the second tying.

By that time all of the officials were more nervous about the gruesome affair than the victim, it seemed. It was a terrible thing to go through with to



tie another noose and put it over the man's head and fix the trap again and make another cut of the rope. But we had to do it. When the victim fell he swung back and forth like a pendulum until he was pronounced dead by the jail physician.

Now that I was jailer and since it seemed that hangings were getting more and more frequent, I decided to visit other county seats and see what sort of gallows they had. I found a good one at Whitesburg, Kentucky and I brought a pattern home.

So, I tore the old gallows down and with new lumber and bolts made one which would not depend upon the cutting of a rope to drop the trap but one whose trap would drop by pulling a lever.

### INNOCENT MAN HANGED

And this new gallows was not long standing in the back yard of the court until Eive Hopson was sentenced to die upon it.

Eive's trouble had started over the theft of a hen from John Salyer's hen roost out at Glamorgan. At the time two other men were with him. They were all drunk. Each was brought to trial. Two got terms in the penitentiary and Eive got the gallows.

I told Wib that I'd done everything that was my duty to do. I'd made a gallows which was easy to handle. All he'd have to do would be to spring the trap by pulling the lever. It'd be easy.

'Easy!' Wib said to me. 'Charles, it's the hardest job I ever had to do. Listen to him! He still says he's innocent and I half way believe he is.'

I'd been good to Eive in jail. He'd wanted to be baptized and I'd got a minister and I'd taken him out to Flanary Creek and the rites were performed in front of a large crowd.

At that baptizing were John Salyers' boys. Eive vowed to them that he hadn't killed their daddy that night the hen roost was robbed. He said that he was drinking along with the other boys, but that he didn't fire a shot, hope to die he hadn't.

But, he said he'd handed his gun to the other boys and then went up into the tree to get a chicken, like the two other men told him to do. While he was up there John Salyers burst out of the house shooting and then somebody shot back and John Salyers was killed.

The two other men had claimed in court that Hopson had done the shooting and the jury had believed them.

There in the court window Hopson told the crowd that since Wib, the sheriff, had tended to him as a baby and had almost raised him, he hoped somebody else would spring the trap.



Well, we went down to the gallows and I put the hood on Hopson's head and I tied his hands behind him and I said that it was all I was going to do.

Then Wib took off his hat and he stood a moment in silence.

'May the Lord have mercy on your soul, Eive,' he said.

He pulled the lever and the peg plopped out and down went the trap and Hopson's body dropped into the box I'd made around the posts of the scaffold. That was May 15, 1903.

The two other men who'd been indicted went to the State penitentiary. Later, after being released from prison, one of them on his death bed confessed to having fired the shot that killed John Salyers.

Then it was that people knew an innocent man had been hanged.

### THEY HANGED A PREACHER

Just a little more than four months after Hopson's hanging the gallows felt the tread of another doomed man, Clifton Branham. Long before Hopson met his fate, Branham's case was hanging in court.

Branham had grown up on the Pound River and He's been in plenty of meanness in Kentucky, where he's served a term in prison. In fact it seemed that he crossed back and forth over the Kentucky border when the law got to trailing him.

He'd gone to the Kentucky penitentiary because of murder. But while he was in prison in that state he turned religious and began preaching and reading the Bible to his fellow inmates. The story of his preaching reached the governor who released him and told him to go home to his wife and children who lived in Virginia.

For a while he roamed over the hills, staying with relatives and friends. Finally he decided to go back to Kentucky since he and his wife couldn't get along. But he stopped short of the state line at his son-in-law's where his wife was staying and while there he got into a quarrel with her, shot and killed her.

As was his custom he skipped to Kentucky. Soon after his return to that state he hired himself out to kill a man; and for the job he was to get as his wife the daughter of the man for whom he was doing murder.

His crimes, however, caught up with him and he was lodged in a Kentucky jail. Virginia authorities prevailed upon the governor of Kentucky for the right to bring him back to Virginia and the Kentucky governor agreed, saying that his home county had a wide reputation for hanging men anyhow and since Branham needed to be hanged he should be brought back.



So he was tried at Wise and found guilty of murder in the first degree.

When Judge Matthews pronounced sentence on Branham, he said: 'You're a mean man, Branham. You're dangerous to society. You've killed three men and your wife. On next Friday, September 25, 1903, you'll hang by the neck until you're dead, dead, dead.'

Branham was defiant to the very last. Hanging seemed to hold no worry for him. It was with a sneer and a hard face he went up onto the scaffold and stood for the black hood. It was the last I slipped over a human head and the last that anyone slipped over a head at the Wise courthouse for the Legislature of Virginia passed a law putting an end to hangings.

(References 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are to the court transcript of the Red Fox trial as published in Johnson's History of Wise County.



## DANIEL BOONE IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

"The Story as Told by Lyman Coleman Draper"

*Edited by James William Hagy*

In the middle of the 19th century Lyman Copeland Draper hurried about the United States collecting manuscripts promising to use them in writing about frontier history. Draper collected a tremendous volume of documents but he could never give up the search and settle down to writing for any length of time. He was always searching for one more document, one more eyewitness account. The people who entrusted Draper with the documents were, of course, highly upset when the promised volumes never appeared — and the documents were not returned. Draper did succeed in writing his long "King's Mountain and Its Heroes" which was published in 1881. A second work which he never finished was his "Life of Boone." Consequently this work has never been published but has been invaluable in helping such writers as John Bakeless whose "Daniel Boone" is the most comprehensive account of the life of this frontiersman.

All of Draper's manuscripts ended up at the Wisconsin Historical Society where they have been of tremendous aid for research in frontier history. The manuscripts can be obtained on microfilm and though this medium is of great importance in making documents available to many people, microfilm is maddening to read for any length of time. Furthermore, one has to be at a library where there is a microfilm reader. Therefore the story of Boone in Southwest Virginia, which is certainly one of the most important periods of his life, is being presented here in order that a wider audience might appreciate the work of Draper who, had he finished his book, would have been the authority on Daniel Boone.

The "Life of Boone" is a handwritten manuscript which frequently wanders from the subject. Therefore a few passages have been edited out. Also the footnotes have been slightly altered so that the sources mentioned by Draper might be located, and a few changes have been made in grammar and punctuation. But for the most part the story reads as Draper wrote it.

The early part of the manuscript deals with the Boone family coming from England, their life in Pennsylvania, their removal to North Carolina, and Daniel Boone's frequent hunts in Kentucky. The part of the story which deals with Southwest Virginia begins at the middle of a page in Chapter IX (3B91). Boone has recently returned from a trip to Kentucky.

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How he spent the ensuing two and a half years after returning from his extended ramblings in Kentucky, his own scanty narrative is entirely silent. He was however, busily employed during the cropping season at home, assisted by his sons James and Israel, while the remainder of each year found him searching the western wilderness for game and a suitable country for a new settlement. During this period, one Joe Robertson, an old weaver who had a famous pack of bear dogs and was devoted to the chase, often accom-



panied Boone into the Brushy Mountain, and over to the Watauga, securing loads of bear skins, which they packed to the settlements and sold. On one of their adventurous trips, they penetrated as far as the French Lick on Cumberland, and found several French hunters there.(1)

In May, 1772, Isaac Shelby, then a young man, met Boone below the Holston settlement alone — such was his passion for adventure; and rehearsed to his new acquaintance the story of his former Kentucky exploration, and robbery by the Indians.(2) There is also reason to believe, that about the year 1772, Boone removed his family to Watauga, and there resided awhile; and then, from some cause, returned to his old place on the Yadkin.(2)

Early in 1773, Daniel Boone, Benjamin Cutbirth, and a few others, explored Kentucky and were greatly pleased with the country. Boone then, for a period, reoccupied his old cave on the right bank of Little Hickman Creek, in what is now Jessamine County, Kentucky, in which he had, probably three years before taken up his temporary abode; there he carved the initials of his name and the year on the side of the cavern — “D. B. — 1773”, and also, in like manner, on several beech trees near the mouth of the cave. Tradition has not preserved the particulars of this journey, and hence we may infer that only incidents of common occurrence attended the adventurers. So gratified were they with Kentucky, that they resolved at once to remove and settle permanently in the country.(4)

It would appear, that Boone, on his way home, made the acquaintance of Captin William Russell, then residing near Castle’s Woods on Clinch River, who entered so heartily into Boone’s views with reference to settling Kentucky, that he agreed to join him in the enterprise. Somewhere in this region, the McAfee company, on their way home from Kentucky, met Boone, about the 12th of August, then making preparations to migrate to that country.(5) Returning to the Yadkin Boone paid a visit to the Bryan Settlement, sixty miles southeast of his residence, where his brother-in-law, William Bryan, several other members of the Bryan connection, together with Benjamin Cutbirth and other hardy adventurers, consented to try their fortunes in the wilderness. It was arranged, that the Bryan party, who could cross the mountains more conveniently to the eastward of Boone’s intended route, should join Boone’s company in Powell’s Valley on a specified day, and pass the most dangerous part of the journey together. Hastening home, Boone sold his farm, and such household goods, produce and farming utensils as he could not well convey so great a distance, when joined by five other families, they “bade farewell to friends,” as Boone tells us in his Narrative, and took their departure for Kentucky on September 25th, 1773. Fifty-six years before Squire Boone, with his parents, had bid adieu to friends and kindred in England, and set sail for the New World; thirty-three years later, Squire Boone with his family, including his son Daniel, set out from Pennsylvania for the Yadkin country; and now, after a lapse of twenty-three years, we find Daniel Boone, true to the instincts of his family, at the head of a little band of poor, but fearless, enterprising men seeking quiet homes in a distant wilderness. Such were the founders — and such the inception of the first earnest attempt at the settlement of Kentucky.



The Bryan party, numbering forty men, overtook the van as agreed on; those of them having families, had left them at home, designing to commence a settlement, and, should circumstances favor, remove their families and effects out afterwards. This reinforcement was not exclusively composed of men from the Valley of South Yadkin, for several had joined them in the Fort Chiswell and Holston Valley regions, among whom were Michael Stoner, William Bush and Edmund Jennings. They had successively passed Clinch Mountain and river, Powell's Mountain and Walden's Ridge, and fairly entered Powell's Valley. Boone pronounced the aspect of those several mountain cliffs "wild and horrid." Yet, it must be confessed, that there is a grandeur in beholding the mighty growth of forest trees, rising in gradual succession one above another from the base to the mountain's summit, their leaves presenting the varied tints of autumn, with here and there an old gray rock jutting from the foilage, or a bank of moss peeping through, with the earth beneath covered with a luxuriant growth of herbs and wildgrass.

Here, at or near the western base of Walden's Ridge, where Powell's River flows along a lovely vale, Boone and his party pitched their camp, and awaited the arrival of the rear. James Boone, and two brothers named John and Richard Mendinall, from Guilford County, North Carolina, had been dispatched from the main company, probably at the Wolf Hills, now Abingdon, across the country to Captain Russell's at Castle's Woods, for the double purpose of notifying him of the advance of Boone's Kentucky adventurers, and procuring a quantity of flour. Pack loads of flour were provided, and Captain Russell sent forward his oldest son Henry, a youth of seventeen, two Negroes names Charles and Adam, together with Isaac Crabtree and a youth named Drake, with several horses ladened with farming utensils, provisions, and other needful articles, and a few books. A small drove of cattle was also sent under their charge. Captain Russell himself remained behind to arrange his business, and then with Captain David Gass to hasten forward and overtake the others. His intention was to erect a comfortable domicile and open a plantation during the autumn and winter, put in a crop in the spring, and return for his family. Had these plans succeeded, William Russell would doubtless have become one of the most distinguished of the primitive settlers of Kentucky.

It was now the 9th of October, and, after dreaming, of danger, the party under young Boone and young Russell pushed on cheerfully, and as rapidly as possible, endeavouring to reach the advance party that evening. Night overtaking them, and probably not aware that the company in front was only three miles distant, they encamped on the northern bank of Walden's Creek, at the old ford near the head of that stream, a southern tributary of Powell's River. Unknown to this little band, a party of stealthy Indians had that day dogged them a considerable distance; and, during the evening, while young Boone and companions were seated around their blazing campfire, they heard the howl of wolves, or a successful imitation on the part of the Indians, when the Mendinalls, unused to such frontier serenades, dropped some expressions of fear. Crabtree, a regular backwoodsman, laughed heartily at their apprehensions, and jeeringly told them that they would hear as well the bellowing of buffaloes as the howling of the wolves in the treetops in Kentucky.



Locked in the sweet embrace of balmy sleep, all unconscious of danger, this little band of emigrants was attacked about daybreak next morning(6) by the Indians, who, creeping close to camp, fired upon their unsuspecting victims, killing some and wounding others. A heart rendering scene ensued. Young Russell was shot through both hips, and was unable to attempt an escape. As the Indians would rush up with their knives to stab him, he would seize the naked blade with his hands, and thus had them badly mangled, and was finally tortured in a most barbarous manner. Young Boone was also shot through his hips, breaking them both, and rendering him helpless. He recognized among the Indians Big Jim, a Shawnee warrior, who had often shared the hospitalities of his father's house. His unusually high cheek bones and broad face, with a singular peculiar chin, rendered it almost impossible for anyone, who had ever known him, to fail instantly to recognize his remarkable features. James Boone implored him by name to spare his life, but former friendship, past favors, nor present misfortunes made any sensible impression on the adamant heart of the blood thirsty warrior. The Indians tortured young Boone by pulling out his toe and finger nails, when he besought Big Jim at once to put him out of his misery. At the same time young Russell was suffering similar tortures, when Boone remarked to him that he presumed his parents, brothers and sisters were all killed by the Indians. At length both the young sufferers were severely stabbed, and probably tomahawked when death, like an angel of mercy, came to their relief.

Both of the Mendinalls and young Drake were among the slain, one of whom at the time ran off, and was neither found nor heard of at that period; but many years after, some of the family of Mr. John Sharp, residing nearby, found the bones of a man between two high ledges of rocks, about an eighth of a mile above the defeated camp, which were supposed to have been those of the missing man, who had probably been mortally wounded, in the attack, fled as far as he could, crawled between the ledges and died. The Negro Adam fortunately escaped unhurt, hid himself in some driftwood on the bank of the creek close at hand, and was an unwilling spectator of the painful scene enacted at the camp. Crabtree, though wounded, also effected his escape, and first reached the settlements; while Adam, getting lost, was eleven days in making his way to the frontier inhabitants. The other Negro, Charles, older and less active than Adam, was taken prisoner by the Indians, who carried him off with the horses and every article they esteemed of any value. When they had gone about forty miles, getting into a dispute about the ownership of the Negro, the leader of the party put an end to the quarrel by tomahawking the poor captive.

In the advance camp was a young fellow who had been detected in pilfering from his comrades, and had become the butt of contempt and ridicule of the camp to such an extent, that he resolved secretly to abandon the party and return to the settlements. He took his silent departure awhile before day on the morning of the fatal 10th of October; and, on the way, stole some deerskins which Daniel Boone had left hung up beside the trail for the rear to bring along. Reaching the ford at Walden's Creek when the Indians could have but a few minutes before decamped, he came upon the mangled remains of the unfortunate slain; when, dropping the skins, he hastened back to the main,



camp, where he arrived, about sunrise, with the unhappy intelligence. Fear, sorrow and confusion more or less agitated every breast, and could be seen depicted on almost every countenance. While a small party under Squire Boone was sent back to bury the dead, recover whatever property the Indians may not have carried off, and ascertain their strength by their sign, Daniel Boone remained with the most of the men, ready to repel any attack that might be made on the main camp; and as they, at first, had no means of knowing the strength of the Indians who had made the fatal onslaught on the rear, they set themselves about making a rude fortification, probably by falling trees around their encampment.

When Squire Boone's burial party reached the defeated camp, they found Captains Russell and Gass already arrived there, viewing the melancholy scene. In young Russell's body, which was mangled in an unhuman manner, was left sticking a dart arrow; and beside all the bodies were left several painted hatchets and war clubs, a sort of Indian declaration of war. Mrs. Daniel Boone had sent sheets for shrouds, and young Boone and Russell were wrapped in the same winding sheet and buried together. Like Saul and Jonathan, they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. The other two slain were also decently interred. The bodies of all were ripped open, but none of them were scalped, as the Indians would not venture to take white scalps to their towns in time of professed peace. The Indians had taken all the plunder, and the cattle were much scattered.

Squire Boone and party, with Captains Russell and Gass, returned to the main camp, where a general council was held. Though it was Daniel Boone's wish to continue the journey, the most of the emigrants were so much disheartened by the check they had received, and thought that only repetitions of Indian cruelty could be expected should they persevere in their attempt, that it was deemed best to abandon the enterprise and return. By this time the cattle had become considerably dispersed, and when collected, and the emigrants satisfied that the Indians, who had done the mischief, were only a small party and had departed, they commenced retracing their footsteps with indescribable feelings of sorrow and disappointment. With Boone the blow was doubly severe, the loss of his oldest son, and the postponement, perhaps forever, of his daring plan of rescuing Kentucky from the grasp of the savage and the wilderness. Such a heavy loss sustained, and such long and deeply cherished hopes deferred, made his very heart sick. But while the others wended their way to their former homes in Virginia and Carolina, Boone accepted the invitation of Captain Gass to take up his temporary abode in a cabin on his farm, about seven or eight miles below Captain Russell's at Castle's Woods, and a little south of Clinch River. Boone was, most likely, induced to this step by the hope of being joined, the ensuing spring, by Captains Gass and Russell in another attempt to permanently occupy Kentucky.

It was a matter of much public concern to learn, with certainty, to what Indian tribes the perpetrators of this Powell's Valley tragedy belonged, and the causes that produced its commission. A considerable time elapsed



before these facts were clearly ascertained. It then appeared, that two Cherokee chiefs were concerned in it, and the others were Shawnees. When Governor Dunmore made a demand upon the Cherokees for satisfaction, John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, dispatched his deputy, Alexander Cameron, to Chotee, where he arrived in the beginning of September ensuing, and succeeded, after much opposition from the young warriors, in having the chief principally implicated in the murder, named Nottawagua, put to death. The executioners first appointed to carry the sentence into effect wounded the culprit in several places and left him for dead; but recovering, and almost out of danger from his wounds, Mr. Cameron renewed his requisition, and with much difficulty and danger to himself, prevailed upon the principal chiefs to go in person and finish him, which they executed with much resolution in spite of all the threats and opposition of his numerous relations and followers; and made several spirited harangues to their people on this occasion, warning them not to follow the example of Nottawagua, lest they should meet the same disgraceful fate, and reprimanding them, in sharp terms, for their bad behaviour on that and other occasions, which brought the young warriors to make their humble submission to their chiefs, and presenting, as a token thereof, several strings of white beads. The other Cherokee chief concerned in this tragedy, was also condemned, but found means to make his escape to the Chickasaws; but was, not long after, caught, confined, and ultimately paid the forfeit for his crime. Governor Dunmore, in a proclamation issued shortly after, pronounced this conduct on the part of the Cherokees, a "remarkable instance of good faith and strict regard to justice."

In his speech at Fort Pitt, Dunmore charged the murder of young Russell and his companions as having been chiefly perpetrated by the perfidious Shawnees, and enumerated it among the chief causes that led to the Indian War of 1774. At Dunmore's treaty at Camp Charlotte, some of the plundered property belonging to Captain Russell, consisting of books and farming implements, was delivered up; but the horses which had also been taken to the Shawnee towns, had been sold to some Pennsylvania traders. How Big Jim, the hard hearted Shawnee warrior, met a merited fate thirteen years after the butchery of young Boone and his companions, will be told in its appropriate place. The cause of this cruel murder, may unquestionably be found in the growing jealousy of the Indians in consequence of the rapid extension of the white settlements, circumscribing the limits of their hunting grounds; pleading, in extenuation of the act, the permission or order of Cameron to rob all white intruders on their lands, by which the profligate portion of the savages became both their judges and executioners.(7)

Boone, as we have seen, retired forty miles to Clinch River, and made preparations for winter. For the support of his family, he must have relied mainly on his stock of cattle and his well tried rifle. A living eyewitness thus describes his appearance at that time: "I have a distinct recollection of seeing Boone at my father's camp, on Reedy Creek on Holston, in company with a tall young man named Crabtree, and some others — I think it must have been in 1773. Boone was dressed in deer-skin colored black, and had his hair plaited and clubbed up, and was on his way to or from Powell's Valley."(8)



Alas, exclaims a faithful writer on western history — alas for our woodman! Another year of quiet, stupid repose and farm labor seemed destined to try his patience. Dozing in security under his stoop by the westward flowing stream, he sighed for the howl of the wolf, and the stealthy, scarce-leaf-rustling tread of the Shawnees. He dozed, but dreamed not how rapidly, since he left them, his fellow white men had desecrated the solemn forest temples he had wandered and worshipped in.(9)

How the winter of 1773-1774, passed away with Boone, we must leave the reader to judge. Hunting, however, must have been his chief occupation for the supply of his family with meat, and the procurement of other necessities by the sale or barter of pelts and furs. He used to relate this hunting adventure, which occurred at that period and in the Clinch region, with the parties to which he was well acquainted. One Green and a brother-in-law, who resided near Blackmore's, on Clinch, about fifteen miles below Captain Gass' place, where Boone was sojourning, went out some considerable distance among the mountains to hunt. They selected a good hunting range, erected a cabin, and laid up in store some jerked bear meat. One day when Green was alone, his companion being absent on the chase, a large bear made his appearance near camp, upon which Green shot and wounded the animal, which at the moment chanced to be in a sort of sink hole at the base of a hill. Taking a circuit to get above and head the bear, there being a slight snow upon the ground covered with sleet, Green's feet slipped from under him, he partly slid and partly rolled down the declivity till he found himself in the sink hole, when the wounded bear, enraged by his pain, flew at poor Green, tore and mangled his body in a shocking manner, totally destroying one of his eyes. When the bear had sufficiently gratified his revenge by gnawing his unresisting victim as long as he wished, he sullenly departed, leaving the unfortunate hunter in a helpless and deplorable condition, all exposed, with his clothing torn in tatters, to the severities of the season.

His comrade at length returning, found and took him to camp. After a while, thinking it impossible for Green to recover, his companion went out on pretense of hunting for fresh meat, and unfeelingly abandoned poor Green to his fate, reporting in the settlements that he had been killed by a bear. His little fire soon died away from his inability to provide fuel. Digging, with his knife, a hole or nest beside him in the ground floor of his cabin, he managed to reach some wild turkey feathers which had been saved, and with them lined the excavation and made himself quite a comfortable bed; and with the knife fastened to the end of a stick, he cut down, from time to time, bits of dried bear meat hanging overhead, and upon this he sparingly subsisted. Recovering slowly, he could at length manage to get about. When spring opened, a party, of whom Boone is believed to have been one, went from Blackmore's Settlement to bury Green's remains, with the brute of a brother-in-law for a guide; and, to their utter astonishment, they met Green plodding his way towards home, and learned from him the sad story of his sufferings and desertion. The party were so indignant that they could scarcely refrain from laying violent hands on a wretch guilty of so much inhumanity to a helpless companion. Green, though greatly disfigured, lived many years.(10)



At this point, Chapter IX of Draper's manuscript ends. The succeeding chapter deals with Boone's participation in Dunmore's War.

## NOTES

1. Manuscript notes of conversations with Colonel Nathan Boone and the late Henry Rutherford, of Tennessee. Soon after the Revolutionary War, Robertson resided in the family of Mr. Rutherford's father, General Griffith Rutherford, of Rowan County, North Carolina, and used to speak of his hunting and exploring with Boone.
2. Bradford, "Notes on Kentucky", Stipp's edition, 12, 13.
3. Conversations with Colonel Nathan Boone and lady. Letter of Daniel Pennington, a nephew of Daniel Boone. Haywood, "The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee", 40.
4. Letters of Duke Hamilton and Samuel M. Duncan, of Jessamine County, Kentucky, and of the late Elijah Callaway, of North Carolina.
5. General R. B. McAfee's "Sketches of the Settlement of Kentucky," in the "Frankfort Commonwealth," June 1, 1841.
6. A newspaper writer, hailing from the Redstone country in West Pennsylvania, whose article, published a year after the transaction, and far distant from the scene of its occurrence, is copied into the first volume of "American Archives," Fourth Series, folio 1015, indeed says that this tragedy happened on the 15th of October, 1773, and also makes other misstatements. We have preferred to follow the date in Boone's "Narrative," corroborated by his original Family Record, now before us, in his own handwriting, in which occurs this entry: "James Boone, son of Daniel and Rebecca Boone, born May 3d, 1757, was killed October ye 10th, 1773, by the Indians."
7. The account of this Powell's Valley affair is made up from the following sources: Boone's "Narrative", "Cape Fear Mercury", Wilmington, North Carolina, December 1, 1773, "Virginia Gazette", December 23, 1773, "American Archives", Fourth Series, I, folios 278, 707, 873, 974, 1015, 1169. Letters of General Hugh Mercer, January 8, 1774, and of Major Arthur Campbell, about June 20th, June 22nd, July 9th, and October 16th, 1774, in the Preston Papers. Statements of the late Daniel Bryan, Major Benjamin Sharp, and Elijah Callaway. Statements of, and notes of conversations with, Colonel Nathan Boone and lady, Captain John Gass, Mrs. Chloe Saunders, a daughter, Mrs. Tabitha Moore, a granddaughter and R. S. Russell, a descendent of Captain William Russell; also from Reverend T. M. Allen, Willis A. Bush, the late Colonel Robert Weakley, and others. (The narrative from the middle of page 3B103 to the middle of page 3B106 is a digression and is therefore omitted.)
8. Letter of the venerable Colonel George Christian, August 25th, 1853.



9. The narrative from the middle of page 3B107 to the last paragraph on page 3B108 is omitted.
10. Notes of conversations with Colonel Nathan Boone, and the late Colonel William Martin of Tennessee. The venerable Captain John Carr, of Sumner County, Tennessee, writes that he has heard from a boy, the story of Green's bear fight and desertion and knew Green's son Zachariah who settled in Sumner County, and died there.







## LEGENDS OF JACOB BLUEBAUGH

*By Mr. Donald Lewis Osborn*

The story that Jacob Bluebaugh had gold was told and retold throughout the neighborhood. Apparently he wouldn't give up the secret as to where he had hidden it even to his second wife under her threats of death. Where he had obtained so much gold that he had to hide it? Probably Jacob brought considerable wealth with him when he came to southwest Virginia as he acquired several acres of land. Perhaps he had gold left after making his land purchases and buried it somewhere on his farm. Or perhaps the money was from the sale of some of his land.

Some say he buried his gold in his first wife's grave.(1) Others say it was by a spring flowing east(2) but who could say which spring? Likely, Jacob owned many springs emitting their waters toward the sunrise. People even had ideas as to the size and nature of the gold — some said it was a peck pot of gold coins.(3)

On his death bed, Jacob supposedly attempted to tell those around him his secret, but he was too weak and feeble in his last few minutes and couldn't make them understand where he had buried his gold. Some thought he mentioned something about a poplar tree. He tried to tell them but he slipped into death still holding his secret.(4)

Many have searched for the treasure. Probably "Old Granny Hettie" herself looked around for it when Jacob was away visiting the neighbors or had slipped off to get some lead ore to make some bullets. Hettie must have searched frantically after Jacob died for then she had no fear he would come home and find her digging. Holes were dug all around on the old Bluebaugh farm by many different people. There is a tradition(5) that one woman named Creech (from the nearby Johnson farm — formerly known as the Bailey farm) searched and thought about the Bluebaugh gold so much that she went crazy and her family would have to lock her in a closet under or behind the stairs when she got uncontrollably violent.

Even within this quarter-century, this writer (Jacob's great-great-great-great-grandson) and some of his cousins searched for the legendary Bluebaugh treasure using an electronic metal detector. Near one stream was buried a pan lid, probably of relatively recent vintage. By a little dry ditch (likely a spring in wet weather or was in Jacob's time) and by a tree (one too young to have been there when Jacob lived), the electronic apparatus registered a signal of something metallic. Excavation was immediately commenced but was somewhat hampered when solid rock was reached. Had a rock slide come down the steep bank sometime in the intervening decades and buried still farther down Jacob's secreted pot of yellow metal? Not to be deterred, a little help from explosives got them down a little ways more. Probably too much has already been revealed. Was something found? That's another secret!

Besides being remembered for his pot of gold, Jacob Bluebaugh was wellknown for his art of moulding bullets out of lead. Known to him and to



no other human being was his source of lead ore. However, it has been said that Indians later spied on him and learned the secret source of ore. Years later, some Indian in Oklahoma is said to have related how he saw "Bluebaugh" get the lead ore. Even the story of the Indian's telling this has gotten hazy with the passage of time and generations but he may have stated that Jacob got the ore at Pea Vine Knob on Wallen's Ridge.(6)

Some Lee County residents of today recall that people have said in years past that Jacob himself was part American Indian(7) and that the old cemetery located six-tenths of a mile straight northeast of the town of Dryden and situated on the top of a knoll is an Indian cemetery. However, it seems that most refer to it as the old Bluebaugh cemetery.

The Bluebaugh cemetery is (or was in 1962, at least) guarded by a lone old weathered lightning-splintered walnut tree. There are several native rock headstones and footstones there but no inscriptions can be found. Probably there never was anything more than hand-scrawled writings on them if even that. Probably Jacob and his two wives are buried there and likely his daughter, Mary (nee Bluebaugh) Flanary, and perhaps some of his and Esther's children.

One can conclude from the existing records and the traditions and legends still told in Lee County that Jacob Bluebaugh was a most interesting and remarkable man even if he perhaps was domineered by "Old Granny Hettie." At least he knew how to keep secrets!

### *NOTES*

- (1) Interview with Mrs. Charles Blair, 1961.
- (2) Interview in 1961 by D. L. Osborn with Mrs. Clyde H. Bishop (See Sada Gilbert), Dryden Virginia.
- (3) Interview June 3, 1961 by D. L. Osborn with Ballard Parsons (born 1880, son of John Morgan Parsons), Dryden, Virginia.
- (4) Interview with Ballard Parsons, June 3, 1961.
- (5) Interview with Mrs. Charles Blair, 1961.
- (6) Interview with Ballard Parsons, June 3, 1961.
- (7) Interview with Mrs. Charles Blair, 1961.



## ADDITIONAL BLUEBAUGH INFORMATION

It is possible that the Jacob BLUEBAUGH having a land survey (150 acres on both sides of North Fork Holston River) in Washington County, Virginia in February, 1786(1) was the Jacob we know of later in Lee County. However, unless the Lee County Jacob was born several years before 1776 (and we know his second wife was born circa 1786), he likely wasn't the Washington County Jacob who likely would have been at least 20 years old when he was having land surveyed in 1786. But they may have been one and the same person.

There is a possibility that Jacob Bluebaugh of Washington County in 1786 was the father or an uncle of Jacob of Lee County. One might further speculate that some earlier records in Frederick County, Maryland, pertain to this Jacob of Washington County, Virginia, but of course it would be pure speculation.

Frederick County, Maryland deed records show that on October 23, 1753, Conrad Hagmire conveyed some land by deed to Jacob BROMBACK (Deed Book E, page 293.) We might suppose this Jacob was aged 20 years or more when he obtained this land which would place his birth before 1734. On March 22, 1773, Jacob BLUEBACK or BLUEBAUGH was petitioning for title to some land in Frederick County called "Weedings Choice" which he was "seized in fee of" (Deed Book P, page 680). Was this the same Jacob who was in Washington County, Virginia in 1786? Two deed records in Frederick County, Maryland are for a Rudey, Rudy, of Rudolph BRUBACK (possibly a corrupted spelling of Bluebaugh.) On October 5, 1759, Edward Diggs and Ralph Taney conveyed land to Rudey and on March 20, 1765, Rudy or Rudolph conveyed land to Andrew Hull (Deed Book 5, Page 836 and Deed Book J, page 1076, respectively). The 1790 Maryland census shows some of the family still there. Benjamin BLUEBACK was a family head in Frederick County with himself aged 16 years and up (born prior to 1775), a free white male under 16 (born 1775-1790), 2 free white females, and 1 slave.

Now let's look at some of the relatively few existing records concerning Jacob Bluebaugh and his family. Spellings of the family name varied somewhat but were usually recognizable. He was Jacob Blewbough, white and above 16 years of age and owner of 9 horses, in the 1795 Lee County Personal Property and Land Book now in the Virginia State Library in Richmond. A similar book for 1796 showed him as Jacob BLEWBAUGH. Other spellings in these tax books through 1829 include, BLUBAUGH, BLUBOCK, BLUEBEAUGH, BLUEBOUGH, BLEUBOUGH, and BLUBAUH. These books show Jacob owned 100 acres during the years 1802 through 1805; 385 acres and 100 acres (total of 485) from 1806 through 1823; 385, 100 and 75 acres in 1824; 385, 100, and 35 acres from 1825 through 1827; and 222 acres in 1828 and 1829. His 385 and 100 acres are described as being on the south side of Poor Valley Ridge and the 222 acres were on the waters of Powell River. A tract of 120 acres owned by James Benham and Peter Little in 1814 is described as on the "Waters blueboughs spring."



The 100 acres mentioned above is apparently the same as that found in the "Surveyors Records, Lee County, 1794-1814", at the Lee County Courthouse. On page 301 we find a sketch drawn of a 100-acre irregularly-shaped piece of land and the following words:

Surveyed Oct. 25th, 1798 for Jacob Bluebough one Hundred acres of land by Virtue of an Entry made Nov. 20th 1783, by Thomas Campbell by him Transferred to James Fugate and by him to sd. Bluebough on a Treasury land warrant W. 8703 lying in Lee County on the waters of Powells River and bounded as followeth. Beginning a Chesnut and pine acorner to sd. Blueboughs land and the land of John Bennums S 85 W 140 po. to tree white Oaks on a spurr of the Poor Valley Ridge N 50 E 344 po. to pointers on sd. ridge N 76 E 100 po. to a stake S 53 E 30 po. to an sd. Blueboughs line and with the same S 76 W 148 po. to a black Oak and S 30 W 202 poles to the Beginning —

Hiram Craig of  
Benj. Sharp S.L.C.

Several other deeds in the Lee County records at Jonesville show Jacob conveying and receiving land. These records along with tax records indicate a slight possibility he may have owned at least 782 acres before he conveyed 297 acres to John Zion in 1812. This agrees with the statement of Mrs. Charles Blair of Lee County in 1961 that the Bluebough farm probably originally contained as much as 700 or 800 acres. She said it covered an area from the Powell River including what is presently known as the Jack Flanary (Silas Jackson Flanary, son of David Crockett Flanary) farm (same as where Silas Flanary — born 1812, died 1898 — lived), the Crit and Elbert Flanary farm (previously known as the Trav Flanary farm), the 'Hobbs farm, the Johnson (formerly Bailey) farm, the Gilbert farm, and the Parsons (John Morgan Parsons, father of Paris Ballard Parsons) farm.

The land holdings of Jacob Bluebaugh can be at least partially reconstructed from these deed records:

	Total Known Holdings(?)
Possible acres owned before 1812 deed (however, 1806 through 1823 tax lists show 485 acres)	782 acres
Sept. 22, 1812 - Jacob BLUBAUGH of Lee Co. to John Zion - 297 acres on S. side of the poor Valley Ridge on the waters of Coxes Spring: after that he owned	485 acres
Holdings according to 1814 tax record	485 acres



July 28, 1823 - Robert Craig of Washington County, Va. to Jacob BLUBOUGH of Lee Co., Va. - 75 acres, part of a survey made on a treasury warrant No. 9068 for 222 acres

560 acres

Oct. 4, 1823 - Jacob BLUBOUGH to John T. Flint - 40 acres lying northwardly to the place where the said Jacob now lives

520 acres

Oct. 4, 1823 - Jacob BLUBOUGH gave a Deed of Trust for 223 acres to Daniel Razor and John Olinger. Jacob apparently retained possession but if we deduct these 223 acres, there are left unaccounted for

297 acres

Is this the remaining 297-acre piece of land conveyed to John Zion in 1812? If so, the tax records of 1814 still showed Jacob owning a total acreage which would have included the 297 acres disposed of in 1812. Perhaps this is a clue that John Zion was of some relation to Jacob and it really didn't matter who paid the taxes. Perhaps John was Jacob's first wife's brother or father which would make Mary (nee Bluebaugh) Flanary's mother a Zion which could account for Mary's naming her youngest son Zion, usually not a given name,

Let us look further at the 1823 Deed of Trust from Jacob Bluebaugh to Daniel Razor and John Olinger. The records states this 223 acres cornered on John Zion's land. Listed are the names of Jacob's wife, Esther M. Blubaugh, and Jacob and Esther's three under-age daughters: Esther Ann, Catharine, and Margaret. This instrument made Razor and Olinger trustees of the land — letting Jacob's wife have the use of the land and personal property until her death or remarriage (should she survive Jacob). At such time, the land was to be divided among the three daughters or the survivors if one or more should die before reaching the age of 18 or marriage.

Perhaps one who is adept at studying deed records would interpret these instruments differently, but it appears that, for some reason, Jacob asked Daniel Razor and John Olinger to convey the 223 acres back to him for that was done on February 15, 1830. Perhaps Jacob was ill and decided to make arrangements for the disposition of his estate. One might wonder if his wife Esther influenced him — either directly to make things more favorable to her or indirectly with her dominant personality to the extent he decided to make them less favourable to her. Census records infer another daughter was born between 1820 and 1825 — perhaps after the 1823 Deed of Trust.

One can reasonably assume that Jacob lived only a short time — not more than a few months — after the 1823 Deed of Trust was revoked by the February 15, 1830 document for we find not Jacob, but Esther BLUBAUGH as early as November 19, 1832 for land "adjoining land of the heirs or devisees of Jacob BLUBOUGH."



What more do the Lee County census records reveal about the Bluebaugh family? In 1820, Jacob BLUEBAUGH was head of the family and aged 45 up (born before 1776) and his wife was aged 26 and under 45 (born 1775-1794). The 3 children were 1 male 10 and under 16 (born 1804-1810) and 2 females under 10 (born 1810-1820). Where was the third daughter? Apparently she was overlooked or was living with someone else at census time for she does appear in the 1830 census. The 1830 census with Esther BLUEBAUGH as the family head shows her aged 40 and under 50 (born 1780-1790) and 5 children living in the household. These 5 were 1 male 20 and under 30 (born 1800-1810), 1 female 15 and under 20 (born 1810-1815), 2 females 10 and under 15 (born 1815-1820), and 1 female 5 and under 10 (born 1820-1825); Incidentally, what happened to the male born between 1800 and 1810 who apparently was Jacob's son? Probably he died as a young man or he emigrated to another part of the country as no later records of Bluebaugh men have been located in Lee County, Virginia records.

To stay in somewhat chronological order, let us look at the Lee County marriage records for 3 daughter of Jacob and Esther:

HESTER ANN BOUBAUGH and THOMAS COLLINGSWORTH on July 17, 1832.

CATHARINE BOUBOUGH and WASHINGTON HOBBS on October 3, 1833.

MARGARET BLUBAUGH and SHELBY HOBBS on October 21, 1835.

Little research on the husbands of these 3 Bluebaugh girls has been done for this writing. However, Thomas and Esther A. COLLINSWORTH were living 2 houses from Esther M. BLABOUGH according to the 1860 census. Also, Shelby HOBBS was living only 1 house from Esther M. BLABOUGH, but with a wife Lucinda(2) It would seem that this Shelby Hobbs was the one who married Margaret Bluebaugh and that Margaret had died and Shelby had remarried. This probability is strengthened by the recollections(3) in 1967 of Ballard Parsons (born 1880) of family traditions (he is not certain of their authenticity) that Shelby Hobbs' first wife got drowned in the river and that he married, secondly, Lucinda whose maiden name was probably France or Zion. Shelby and Lucinda had several children. Shelby had a third wife, Sue Rivers.

According to the census taken on August 22, 1860, Esther M. BLABOUGH was 74 years old (born circa 1786) with the occupation of "House Keeper" and birthplace of Augusta County, Virginia. Her assets shown are \$50 personal estate and no real estate. Her neighbor Shelby Hobbs had \$10,000 real estate and \$1,500 personal estate. These figures would indicate that all of Jacob Bluebaugh's land had been disposed of and that his widow still had only the personal property.

The only other person in the BLABOUGH household in 1860 was John Colton, age 24, a "Farm Laborer" born in Lee County, Virginia. Probably



Esther, Jacob's second wife, died prior to 1870 as she was not noticed in the Lee County, Virginia census for that year.

### *NOTES*

1. "Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800", by Lewis Preston Summers, Abingdon, Va., 1929, page 1786.
2. Federal Census, 1860, for Lee County, Virginia shows the Collinsworths on pages 243 and 244 (House No. 1569, Family No. 1608) and the Blabough and Hobbs households on page 244 (House No. 1571, Family No. 1610 and House No. 1572, Family No. 1611, respectively).
3. As told by Ballard Parsons to his daughter, Mrs. Axley Greene (nee Zora Parsons) and written by her in a letter to D. L. Osborn, November 25, 1967. Mr. Parsons (now deceased) resided near Dryden, Virginia.



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